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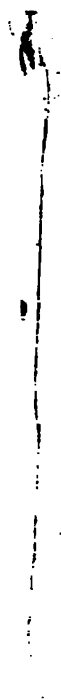




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THE
SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR.

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THE
SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR.

BY JAMES HOGG,

AUTHOR OF "THE QUEEN'S WAKE," &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



**WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH;
AND T. CADELL, LONDON.
MDCCCXXIX.**

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE greater number of the Tales contained in these volumes appeared originally in BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE. They have been revised with care; and to complete the Collection, several Tales hitherto unpublished have been added.

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THE

SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR.

CHAPTER I.

ROB DODDS.

It was on the 13th of February 1823, on a cold stormy day, the snow lying from one to ten feet deep on the hills, and nearly as hard as ice, when an extensive store-farmer in the outer limits of the county of Peebles went up to one of his led farms, to see how his old shepherd was coming on with his flocks. A partial thaw had blackened some spots here and there on the brows of the mountains, and over these the half-starving flocks were scattered, picking up a scanty sustenance, while all the hollow parts, and whole sides of mountains that lay sheltered from the winds on the preceding week, when the great drifts blew, were heaped and over-heaped with immense loads of snow, so that every hill appeared to the farmer to have changed its form. There was a thick white haze on

the sky, corresponding exactly with the wan frigid colour of the high mountains, so that in casting one's eye up to the heights, it was not apparent where the limits of the earth ended, and the heavens began. There was no horizon—no blink of the sun looking through the pale and impervious mist of heaven; but there, in that elevated and sequestered *hope*, the old shepherd and his flock seemed to be left out of nature and all its sympathies, and embosomed in one interminable chamber of waste desolation.—So his master thought; and any stranger beholding the scene, would have been still more deeply impressed that the case was so in reality.

But the old shepherd thought and felt otherwise. He saw God in the clouds, and watched his arm in the direction of the storm. He perceived, or thought he perceived, one man's flocks suffering on account of their owner's transgression; and though he bewailed the hardships to which the poor harmless creatures were reduced, he yet acknowledged in his heart the justness of the punishment. "These temporal scourges are laid upon sinners in mercy," said he, "and it will be well for them if they get so away. It will teach them in future how to drink and carouse, and speak profane things of the name of Him in whose hand are the issues of life, and to regard his servants as the dogs of their flock."

Again, he beheld from his heights, when the days were clear, the flocks of others more favourably situated, which he interpreted as a reward for their acts of charity and benevolence ; for this old man believed that all temporal benefits are sent to men as a reward for good works ; and all temporal deprivations as a scourge for evil ones.

“ I hae been a herd in this hope, callant and man, for these fifty years now, Janet,” said he to his old wife, “ and I think I never saw the face o’ the country look waur.”

“ Hout, gudeman, it is but a clud o’ the despondency o’ auld age come ower your een ; for I hae seen waur storms than this, or else my sight deceives me. This time seven and thirty years, when you and I were married, there was a deeper, and a harder snaw baith, than this. There was mony a burn dammed up wi’ dead hogs that year ! And what say ye to this time nine years, gudeman ?”

“ Ay, ay, Janet, these were hard times when they were present. But I think there’s something in our corrupt nature that gars us aye trow the present burden is the heaviest. However, it is either my strength failing, that I canna won sae weel through the snaw, or I never saw it lying sae deep before. I canna steer the poor creatures frae ae knowe-head to another, without rowing them ower the body. And sometimes

when they wad spraughle away, then I stick firm and fast mysell, and the mair I fight to get out, I gang aye the deeper. This same day, nae farther gane, at ae step up in the Gait Cleuch, I slumpit in to the neck. Peace be wi' us, quo' I to myself, where am I now? If my auld wife wad but look up the hill, she wad see nae mair o' her poor man but the bannet. Ah! Janet, Janet, I'm rather feared that our Maker has a craw to pook wi' us even now!"

"I hope no, Andrew; we're in good hands; and if he should e'en see meet to pook a craw wi' us, he'll maybe fling us baith the bouk and the feathers at the end. Ye shouldna repine, gudeman. Ye're something ill for thrawing your mou' at Providence now and then."

"Na, na, Janet; far be't frae me to grumble at Providence. I ken ower weel that the warst we get is far aboon our merits. But it's no for the season that I'm sae feared,—that's ruled by Ane that canna err; only, I dread that there's something rotten in the government or the religion of the country, that lays it under His curse. There's my fear, Janet. The scourge of a land often fa's on its meanest creatures first, and advances by degrees, to gie the boonmost orders o' society warning and time to repent. There, for instance, in the saxteen and seventeen, the scourge fell on our flocks and our herds. Then, in aughteen and

nineteen, it fell on the weavers,—they're the neist class, ye ken ; then our merchants,—they're the neist again ; and last of a' it has fallen on the farmers and the shepherds,—they're the first and maist sterling class of a country. Na, ye needna smudge and laugh, Janet ; for it's true. They *are* the boonmost, and hae aye been the boonmost sin' the days o' Abel ; and that's nae date o' yesterday. And ye'll observe, Janet, that whenever they began to fa' low, they gat aye another lift to keep up their respect. But I see our downfa' coming on us wi' rapid strides.—There's a heartlessness and apathy croppen in amang the sheep-farmers, that shows their warldly hopes to be nearly extinct. The maist o' them seem no to care a bodle whether their sheep die or live. There's our master, for instance, when times were gaun weel, I hae seen him up ilka third day at the farthest in the time of a storm, to see how the sheep were doing ; and this winter I hae never seen his face sin' it came on. He seems to hae forgotten that there are sic creatures existing in this wilderness as the sheep and me.—His presence be about us, gin there be nae the very man come by the window !”

Janet sprung to her feet, swept the hearth, set a chair on the cleanest side, and wiped it with her check apron, all ere one could well look about him.

"Come away, master ; come in by to the fire here ; lang-lookit-for comes at length."

"How are you, Janet ?—still living, I see. It is a pity that you had not popped off before this great storm came on."

"Dear, what for, master ?"

"Because if you should take it into your head to coup the creels just now, you know it would be out of the power of man to get you to a Christian burial. We would be obliged to huddle you up in the nook of the kail-yard."

"Ah, master, what's that you're saying to my auld wife ? Aye the auld man yet, I hear ! a great deal o' the leaven o' corrupt nature aye sprouting out now and then. I wonder you're no fear'd to speak in that regardless manner in these judgment-looking times !"

"And you are still the old man too, Andrew ; a great deal of cant and hypocrisy sprouting out at times. But tell me, you old sinner, how has your Maker been serving you this storm ? I have been right terrified about your sheep ; for I know you will have been very impertinent with him of evenings."

"Hear to that now ! There's no hope, I see ! I thought to find you humbled wi' a' thir trials and warldly losses ; but I see the heart is hardened like Pharaoh's, and you will not let the multitude of your sins go. As to the storm, I can tell you, my sheep

are just at ane mae wi't. I am waur than ony o' my neighbours, as I lie higher on the hills ; but I may hae been as it chanced, for you ; for ye hae never lookit near me mair than you had had no concern in the creatures."

" Indeed, Andrew, it is because neither you nor the creatures are much worth looking after now-a-days. If it hadna been the fear I was in for some mishap coming over the stock, on account of these hypocritical prayers of yours, I would not have come to look after you so soon."

" Ah, there's nae mense to be had o' you ! It's a good thing I ken the heart's better than the tongue, or ane wad hae little face to pray either for you, or aught that belangs t'ye. But I hope ye hae been nae the waur o' auld Andrew's prayers as yet. An some didna pray for ye, it wad maybe be the waur for ye. I prayed for ye when ye couldna pray for yoursell, and had hopes that, when I turned auld and doited, you might say a kind word for me ; but I'm fear'd that world's wealth and world's pleasures hae been leading you ower lang in their train, and that ye hae been trusting to that which will soon take wings and flee away."

" If you mean riches, Andrew, or world's wealth, as you call it, you never said a truer word in your life ; for the little that my forbears and I have made, is ac-

tually, under the influence of these long prayers of yours, melting away from among my hands faster than ever the snow did from the dike."

"It is perfectly true, what you're saying, master. I ken the extent o' your bits o' sales weel enough, and I ken your rents; and weel I ken you're telling me nae lee. And it's e'en a hard case. But I'll tell you what I would do—I would throw their tacks in their teeth, and let them mak aught o' them they likit."

"Why, that would be ruin at once, Andrew, with a vengeance. Don't you see that stocks of sheep are fallen so low, that if they were put to sale, they would not pay more than the rents, and some few arrears that every one of us have got into; and thus, by throwing up our farms, we would throw ourselves out beggars? We are all willing to put off the evil day as long as we can, and rather trust to long prayers for a while."

"Ah! you're there again, are you?—canna let alane profanity! It's hard to gar a wicked cout leave off flinging. But I can tell you, master mine—An you farmers had made your hay when the sun shone, ye might a' hae sitten independent o' your screwing lairds, wha are maistly sair out at elbows; and ye ken, sir, a hungry louse bites wicked sair. But this is but a just judgment come on you for your behaviour. Ye had the gaun days o' prosperity for twenty years! But instead o' laying by a little for a sair leg, or making

provision for an evil day, ye gaed on like madmen. Ye biggit houses, and ye plantit vineyards, and threw away money as ye had been sawing sklate-stanes. Ye drank wine, and ye drank punch; and ye roared and ye sang, and spake unseemly things. And did ye never think there was an ear that heard, and an ee that saw, a' thae things? And did ye never think that they wad be visited on your heads some day when ye couldna play paw to help yoursell? If ye didna think sae then, ye'll think sae soon. And ye'll maybe see the day when the like o' auld Andrew, wi' his darned hose, and his cloutit shoon; his braid bannet, instead of a haiver; his drink out o' the clear spring, instead o' the punch bowl; and his good steeve ait-meal parritch and his horn spoon, instead o' the draps o' tea, that costs sae muckle—I say, that sic a man wi' a' thae, and his worthless prayers to boot, will maybe keep the crown o' the causeway langer than some that carried their heads higher."

"Hout fie, Andrew!" quoth old Janet; "Gude-ness be my help, an I dinna think shame o' you! Our master may weel think ye'll be impudent wi' your Maker; for troth you're very impudent wi' himsell. Dinna ye see that ye hae made the dounce sonsy lad that he disna ken where to look?"

"Ay, Janet, your husband may weel crack. He

kens he has feathered his nest off my father and me. He is independent, let the world wag as it will."

"It's a' fairly come by, master, and the maist part o't came through your ain hands. But my bairns are a' doing for themsells, in the same way that I did; and if twa or three hunder pounds can beet a mister for you in a strait, ye sanna want it, come of a' what will."

"It is weel said of you, Andrew, and I am obliged to you. There is no class of men in this kingdom so independent as you shepherds. You have your sheep, your cow, your meal and potatoes; a regular income of from sixteen to thirty pounds yearly, without a farthing of expenditure, except for shoes; for your clothes are all made at home. If you would even wish to spend it, you cannot get an opportunity, and every one of you is rich, who has not lost money by lending it. It is therefore my humble opinion, that all the farms over this country will soon change occupants; and that the shepherds must ultimately become the store-farmers."

"I hope in God I'll never live to see that, master, for the sake of them that I and mine hae won our bread frae, as weel as some others that I hae a great respect for. But that's no a thing that hasna happened afore this day. It is little mair than a hundred and forty years, sin' a' the land i' this country changed

masters already; sin' every farmer in it was reduced, and the farms were a' ta'en by common people and strangers at half naething. The Welshes came here then, out o' a place they ca' Wales, in England; the Andersons came frae a place they ca' Rannoch, some gate i' the north; and your ain family came first to this country then frae some bit lairdship near Glasgow. There were a set o' MacGregors and MacDougals, said to have been great thieves, came into Yarrow then, and changed their names to Scotts; but they didna thrive; for they warna likit, and the hinderend o' them were in the Catslackburn. They ca'd them aye the Pinolys, frae the place they came frae; but I dinna ken where it was. The Ballantynes came frae Galloway; and for as flourishing folks as they are now, the first o' them came out at the Birkhill-path, riding on a haltered pony, wi' a goat-skin aneath him for a saddle. The Cunninghams, likewise, began to spread their wings at the same time; they came a' frae a little fat curate that came out o' Glencairn to Ettrick. But that's nae disparagement to ony o' thae families; for an there be merit at a' inherent in man as to warldly things, it is certainly in raising himsell frae naething to respect. There is nae very ancient name amang a' our farmers now, but the Tweedies and the Murrays; I mean of them that anciently belanged to this district. The Tweedies are very auld, and took the name frae

the water. They were lairds o' Drummelzier hunders o' years afore the Hays got it, and hae some o' the best blood o' the land in their veins; and sae also have the Murrays; but the maist part o' the rest are upstarts and come-o'-wills. Now ye see, for as far outbye as I live, I can tell ye some things that ye dinna hear amang your drinking cronies."

"It is when you begin to these old traditions that I like to listen to you, Andrew. Can you tell me what was the cause of such a complete overthrow of the farmers of that age?"

"Oh, I canna tell, sir—I canna tell; some overturn o' affairs, like the present, I fancy. The farmers had outhter lost a' their sheep, or a' their siller, as they are like to do now; but I canna tell how it was; for the general change had ta'en place, for the maist part, afore the Revolution. My ain grandfather, who was the son of a great farmer, hired himsell for a shepherd at that time to young Tam Linton; and mony ane was wae for the downcome. But, speaking o' that, of a the downcomes that ever a country kenn'd in a farming name, there has never been ought like that o' the Lintons. When my grandfather was a young man, and ane o' their herds, they had a' the principal store-farms o' Ettrick Forest, and a part in this shire. They had, when the great Mr Boston came to Ettrick, the farms o' Blackhouse, Dryhope, Henderland, Chapel-

hope, Scabcleuch, Shorthope, Midgehope, Meggat-knowes, Buccleuch, and Gilmanscleuch, that I ken of, and likely as mony mae; and now there's no a man o' the name in a' the bounds aboon the rank of a cowherd. Thomas Linton rode to kirk and market, wi' a liveryman at his back; but where is a' that pride now? —a' buried in the mools wi' the bearers o't! and the last representative o' that great overgrown family, that laid house to house, and field to field, is now sair gane on a wee, wee farm o' the Duke o' Buccleuch's. The ancient curse had lighted on these men, if ever it lighted on men in this world. And yet they were reckoned good men, and kind men, in their day; for the good Mr Boston wrote an epitaph on Thomas, in metre, when he died; and though I have read it a hundred times in St Mary's kirk-yard, where it is to be seen to this day, I canna say it ower. But it says that he was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and that the Lord would requite him in a day to come, or something to that purpose. Now that said a great deal for him, master, although Providence has seen meet to strip his race of a' their worldly possessions. But take an auld fool's advice, and never lay farm to farm, even though a fair opportunity should offer; for, as sure as He lives who pronounced that curse, it will take effect. I'm an auld man, and I hae seen mony a dash made that way; but I never saw ane o'

them come to good! There was first Murray of Glenrath; why, it was untelling what land that man possessed. Now his family has not a furr in the twa counties. Then there was his neighbour Simpson of Posse: I hae seen the day that Simpson had two-and-twenty farms, the best o' the twa counties, and a' stockit wi' good sheep. Now there's no a drap o' *his* blood has a furr in the twa counties. Then there was Grieve of Willenslee; ane wad hae thought that body was gaun to take the haill kingdom. He was said to have had ten thousand sheep, a' on good farms, at ae time. Where are they a' now? Neither *him* nor *his* hae a furr in the twa counties. Let me tell ye, master—for ye're but a young man, and I wad aye fain have ye to see things in a right light—that ye may blame the wars; ye may blame the Government; and ye may blame the Parliamenters: but there's a hand that rules higher than a' these; and gin ye dinna look to that, ye'll never look to the right source either o' your prosperity or adversity. And I sairly doubt that the pride o' the farmers has been raised to ower great a pitch, that Providence has been brewing a day of humiliation for them, and that there will be a change o' hands since mair, as there was about this time hunder and forty years."

"Then I suppose you shepherds expect to have cen-

tury about with us, or so? Well, I don't see any thing very unfair in it."

"Ay, but I fear we will be as far aneath the right medium for a while, as ye are startit aboon it. We'll make a fine hand doing the honours o' the grand mansion-houses that ye hae biggit for us; the cavalry exercises; the guns and the pointers; the wine and the punch drinking; and the singing o' the deboshed sangs! But we'll just come to the right set again in a generation or twa; and then, as soon as we get ower hee, we'll get a downcome in our turn.—But, master, I say, how will you grand gentlemen tak wi' a shepherd's life? How will ye like to be turned into reeky holes like this, where ye can hardly see your fingers afore ye, and be reduced to the parritch and the horn spoon?"

"I cannot tell, Andrew. I suppose it will have some advantages—It will teach us to say long prayers to put off the time; and if we should have the misfortune afterwards to pass into *the bad place* that you shepherds are all so terrified about, why, we will scarcely know any difference. I account that a great advantage in dwelling in such a place as this. We'll scarcely know the one place from the other."

"Ay, but oh what a surprise ye will get when ye step out o' ane o' your grand palaces into hell! And gin ye dinna repent in time, ye'll maybe get a little experiment o' that sort. Ye think ye hae said a very

witty thing there: but a' profane wit is sinfu'; and whatever is sinfu' is shamefu'; and therefore it never suits to be said either afore God or man. Ye are just a good standing sample o' the young tenantry o' Scotland at this time. Ye're ower genteel to be devout, and ye look ower high, and depend ower muckle on the arm o' flesh, to regard the rod and Him that hath appointed it. But it will fa' wi' the mair weight for that! A blow that is seen coming may be wardit off; but if ane's sae proud as no to regard it, it's the less scaith that he suffer."

"I see not how any man can ward off this blow, Andrew. It has gathered its overwhelming force in springs over which we have no control, and is of that nature that no industry of man can avail against it—exertion is no more than a drop in the bucket: and I greatly fear that this grievous storm is come to lay the axe to the root of the tree."

"I'm glad to hear, however, that ye hae some Scripture phrases at your tongue-roots. I never heard you use ane in a serious mode before; and I hope there will be a reformation yet. If adversity hae that effect, I shall willingly submit to my share o' the loss if the storm should lie still for a while, and cut off a wheen o' the creatures, that ye aince made eedals o', and now dow hardly bide to see. But that's the gate wi' a things that ane sets up for warldly worship in place o'

the true object; they turn a' out curses and causes o' shame and disgrace. As for warding off the blow, master, I see no resource but throwing up the farms ilk ane, and trying to save a remnant out o' the fire. The lairds want naething better than for ye to rin in arrears; then they will get a' your stocks for neist to naething, and have the land stockit themselfs as they had langsyne; and you will be their keepers, or vassals, the same as we are to you at present. As to hinging on at the present rents, it is madness—the very extremity of madness. I hae been a herd here for fifty years, and I ken as weel what the ground will pay at every price of sheep as you do, and I daresay a great deal better. When I came here first, your father paid less than the third of the rent that you are bound to pay; sheep of every description were dearer, lambs, ewes, and wedders; and I ken weel he was making no money of it, honest man, but merely working his way, with some years a little over, and some naething. And how is it possible that you can pay three times the rent at lower prices of sheep? I say the very presumption of the thing is sheer madness. And it is not only this farm, but you may take it as an average of all the farms in the country, that *before the French war began, the sheep were dearer than they are now—the farms were not above one-third of the rents at an average, and the farmers were not making any money.* They have lost

their summer day during the French war, which will never return to them ; and the only resource they have, that I can see, is to abandon their farms in time, and try to save a remnant. Things will come to their true level presently, but, not afore the auld stock o' farmers are crushed past rising again. And then I little wat what's to come o' ye ; for an we herds get the land, we *winna* employ you as our shepherds,—that you may depend on."

" Well, Andrew, these are curious facts that you tell me about the land having all changed occupiers about a certain period. I wish you could have stated the causes with certainty. Was there not a great loss on this farm once, when it was said the burn was so dammed up with dead carcasses that it changed its course ?"

" Ay, but that's quite a late story. It happened in my own day, and I believe mostly through mischance. That was the year Rob Dodds was lost in the Earney Cleuch. I remember it, but cannot tell what year it was, for I was but a little bilsh of a callant then."

" Who was Rob Dodds ? I never heard of the incident before."

" Ay, but your father remembered it weel ; for he sent a' his men mony a day to look for the corpse, but a' to nae purpose. I'll never forget it ; for it made an impression on me sae deep that I couldna get rest

i' my bed for months and days. He was a young handsome bonny lad, an honest man's only son, and was herd wi' Tam Linton in the Birkhill. The Lintons were sair come down then ; for this Tam was a herd, and had Rob hired as his assistant. Weel, itsae happened that Tam's wife had occasion to cross the wild heights atween the Birkhill and Tweedsmuir, to see her mother, or sister, on some express ; and Tam sent the young man wi' her to see her ower Donald's Cleuch Edge. It was in the middle o' winter, and, if I mind right, this time sixty years. At the time they set out, the morning was calm, frosty, and threatening snaw, but the ground clear of it. Rob had orders to set his mistress to the height, and return home ; but by the time they had got to the height, the snaw had come on, so the good lad went all the way through Guemshope with her, and in sight of the water o' Fruid. He crossed all the wildest o' the heights on his return in safety ; and on the Middle-End, west of Loch-Skene, he met with Robin Laidlaw, that went to the Highlands and grew a great farmer after that. Robin was gathering the Polmoody ewes ; and as they were neighbours, and both herding to ae master, Laidlaw testified some anxiety lest the young man should not find his way hame ; for the blast had then come on very severe. Dodds leugh at him, and said, ' he was nae mair feared for finding the gate hame, than he was for finding the gate to

his mouth when he was hungry.'—'Weel, weel,' quo' Robin, 'keep the band o' the hill a' the way, for I hae seen as clever a fellow waured on sic a day; and be sure to hund the ewes out o' the Brand Law Scores as ye gang by.'—'Tammy charged me to bring a backfu' o' peats wi' me,' said he; 'but I think I'll no gang near the peat stack the day.'—'Na,' quo' Robin, 'I think ye'll no be sae mad!'—'But, O man,' quo' the lad, 'hae ye ony bit bread about your pouches; for I'm unco hungry? The wife was in sic a hurry that I had to come away without getting ony breakfast, and I had sae far to gang wi' her, that I'm grown unco toom i' the inside.'—'The fient ae inch hae I, Robie, my man, or ye should hae had it,' quo' Laidlaw.—'But an that be the case, gang straight hame, and never heed the ewes, come o' them what will.'—'O there's nae fear!' said he, 'I'll turn the ewes, and be hame in good time too.' And with that he left Laidlaw, and went down the Middle-Craig-End, jumping and playing in a frolicsome way ower his stick. He had a large lang nibbit staff in his hand, which Laidlaw took particular notice of, thinking it would be a good help for the young man in the rough way he had to gang.

"There was never another word about the matter till that day eight days. The storm having increased to a terrible drift, the snaw had grown very deep, and the herds, wha lived about three miles sindry, hadna

met for a' that time. But that day Tam Linton and Robin Laidlaw met at the Tail Burn ; and after crack-ing a lang time thegither, Tam says to the tither, just as it war by chance, ' Saw ye naething o' our young dinnagood this day eight days, Robin ? He gaed awa that morning to set our gudewife ower the height, and has never sin' that time lookit near me, the careless rascal !'

“ ‘ Tam Linton, what's that you're saying ? what's that I hear ye saying, Tam Linton ?' quo' Robin, wha was dung clean stupid wi' horror. ‘ Hae ye never seen Rob Dodds sin' that morning he gaed away wi' your wife ?'

“ ‘ Na, never,' quo' the tither.

“ ‘ Why then, sir, let me tell ye, you'll never see him again in this world alive,' quo' Robin ; ‘ for he left me on the Middle-End on his way hame that day at eleven o'clock, just as the day was coming to the warst.—But, Tam Linton, what was't ye war saying ? Ye're telling me what canna be true—Do ye say that ye hae-na seen Rob Dodds sin' that day ?'

“ ‘ Haena I tauld ye that I hae never seen his face sinsyne ?' quo' Linton.

“ ‘ Sae I hear ye saying,' quo' Robin again. ‘ But ye're telling me a downright made lee. The thing's no possible ; for ye hae the very staff i' your hand that he had in his, when he left me in the drift that day.'

“ ‘ I ken naething about sticks or staves, Robin Laidlaw,’ says Tam, looking rather like ane caught in an ill turn. ‘ The staff wasna likely to come hame without the owner ; and I can only say, I hae seen nae mair o’ Rob Dodds sin’ that morning ; and I had thoughts that, as the day grew sae ill, he had hadden forrit a’ the length wi’ our wife, and was biding wi’ her folks a’ this time to bring her hame again when the storm had settled.’

“ ‘ Na, na, Tam, ye needna get into ony o’ thae lang-windit stories wi’ me,’ quo’ Robin. ‘ For I tell ye, that’s the staff Rob Dodds had in his hand when I last saw him ; so ye have either seen him dead or living—I’ll gie my oath to that.’

“ ‘ Ye had better take care what ye say, Robin Laidlaw,’ says Tam, very fiercely, ‘ or I’ll maybe make ye blithe to eat in your words again.’

“ ‘ What I hae said, I’ll stand to, Tam Linton,’ says Robin.—‘ And mair than that,’ says he, ‘ if that young man has come to an untimely end, I’ll see his blood required at your hand.’

“ Then there was word sent away to the Hopehouse to his parents, and ye may weel ken, master, what heavy news it was to them, for Rob was their only son ; they had gien him a good education, and muckle muckle they thought o’ him ; but naething wad serve him but he wad be a shepherd. His father

came wi' the maist pairt o' Ettrick parish at his back ; and mony sharp and threatening words past atween him and Linton ; but what could they make o't ? The lad was lost, and nae law, nor nae revenge, could restore him again ; sae they had naething for't, but to spread athwart a' the hills looking for the corpse. The haill country rase for ten miles round, on ane or twa good days that happened ; but the snaw was still lying, and a' their looking was in vain. Tam Linton wad look nane. He took the dorts, and never heeded the folk mair than they hadna been there. A' that height atween Loch-Skene and the Birkhill was just moving wi' folk for the space o' three weeks ; for the twa auld folk, the lad's parents, couldna get ony rest, and folk sympathized unco muckle wi' them. At length the snaw gaed maistly away, and the weather turned fine, and I gaed out ane o' the days wi' my father to look for the body. But, aih wow ! I was a feared wight ! whenever I saw a bit sod, or a knowe, or a grey stane, I stood still and trembled for fear it was the dead man, and no ae step durst I steer farther, till my father gaed up to a' thae things. I gaed nae mair back to look for the corpse ; for I'm sure if we had found the body I wad hae gane out o' my judgment.

“ At length every body tired o' looking, but the auld man himsell. He travelled day after day, ill weather and good weather, without intermission. They said

it was the waesomest thing ever was seen, to see that auld grey-headed man gaun sae lang by himsell, looking for the corpse o' his only son ! The maist part o' his friends advised him at length to give up the search, as the finding o' the body seemed a thing a'thegither hopeless. But he declared he wad look for his son till the day o' his death ; and if he could but find his bones, he would carry them away from the wild moors, and lay them in the grave where he was to lie himsell. Tam Linton was apprehended, and examined afore the Sheriff ; but nae proof could be led against him, and he wan off. He swore that, as far as he remembered, he got the staff standing at the mouth o' the peat stack ; and that he conceived that either the lad or himsell had left it there some day when bringing away a burden of peats. The shepherds' peats had not been led home that year, and the stack stood on a hill-head, half a mile frae the house, and the herds were obliged to carry them home as they needed them.

“ But a mystery hung ower that lad's death that was never cleared up, nor ever will a'thegither. Every man was convinced, in his own mind, that Linton knew where the body was a' the time ; and also, that the young man had not come by his death fairly. It was proved that the lad's dog had come hame several times, and that Tam Linton had been seen kicking it frae about his house ; and as the dog could be nowhere

all that time, but waiting on the body, if that had no been concealed in some more than ordinary way, the dog would at least have been seen. At length, it was suggested to the old man, that dead-lights always hovered over a corpse by night, if the body was left exposed to the air; and it was a fact that two drowned men had been found in a field of whins, where the water had left the bodies, by means of the dead-lights, a very short while before. On the first calm night, therefore, the old desolate man went to the Merk-Side-Edge, to the top of a high hill that overlooked all the ground where there was ony likelihood that the body would be lying. He watched there the lee-lang night, keeping his eye constantly roaming ower the broken wastes before him; but he never noticed the least glimmer of the dead-lights. About midnight, however, he heard a dog barking; it likewise gae twa or three melancholly yowls, and then ceased. Robin Dodds was convinced it was his son's dog; but it was at such a distance, being about twa miles off, that he couldna be sure where it was, or which o' the hills on the opposite side of the glen it was on. The second night he kept watch on the Path Know, a hill which he supposed the howling o' the dog cam frae. But that hill being all surrounded to the west and north by tremendous ravines and cataracts, he heard nothing o' the dog. In the course of the night, however, he saw, or fancied he

saw, a momentary glimmer o' light, in the depth of the great gulf immediately below where he sat; and that at three different times, always in the same place. He now became convinced that the remains o' his son were in the bottom of the linn, a place which he conceived inaccessible to man; it being so deep from the summit where he stood, that the roar o' the waterfall only reached his ears now and then wi' a loud *whush!* as if it had been a sound wandering across the hills by itself. But sae intent was Robin on this Willie-an-the-wisp light, that he took landmarks frae the ae summit to the other, to make sure o' the place; and as soon as daylight came, he set about finding a passage down to the bottom of the linn. He effected this by coming to the foot of the linn, and tracing its course backward, sometimes wading in water, and sometimes clambering over rocks, till at length, with a beating heart, he reached the very spot where he had seen the light; and in the grey o' the morning, he perceived something lying there that differed in colour from the iron-hued stones, and rocks, of which the linn was composed. He was in great astonishment what this could be; for, as he came closer on it, he saw it had no likeness to the dead body of a man, but rather appeared to be a heap o' bed-clothes. And what think you it turned out to be? for I see ye're glowing as your een were gaun to loup out—Just neither more nor less than a strong mineral

well ; or what the doctors ca' a callybit spring, a' boustered about wi' heaps o' soapy, limy kind o' stuff, that it seems had thrown out fiery vapours i' the night-time.

“ However, Robin, being unable to do ony mair in the way o' searching, had now nae hope left but in finding his dead son by some kind o' supernatural means. Sae he determined to watch a third night, and that at the very identical peat stack where it had been said his son's staff was found. He did sae ; and about midnight, ere ever he wist, the dog set up a howl close beside him. He called on him by his name, and the dog came, and fawned on his old acquaintance, and whimpered, and whinged, and made sic a wark, as could hardly hae been trowed. Robin keepit haud o' him a' the night, and fed him wi' pieces o' bread, and then as soon as the sun rose, he let him gang ; and the poor affectionate creature went straight to his dead master, who, after all, was lying in a little green spritty hollow, not above a musket-shot from the peat stack. This rendered the whole affair more mysterious than ever ; for Robin Dodds himself, and above twenty men beside, could all have made oath that they had looked into that place again and again, so minutely, that a dead bird could not have been there without their having seen it. However, there the body of the youth was gotten, after having been lost for the

long space of ten weeks ; and not in a state of great decay neither, for it rather appeared swollen, as if it had been lying among water.

“ Conjecture was now driven to great extremities in accounting for all these circumstances. It was manifest to every one, that the body had not been all the time in that place. But then, where had it been ? or what could have been the reasons for concealing it ? These were the puzzling considerations. There were a hunder different things suspectit ; and mony o’ them, I dare say, a hunder miles frae the truth ; but on the whole, Linton was sair lookit down on, and almaist perfectly abhorred by the country ; for it was weel kenn’d that he had been particularly churlish and severe on the young man at a’ times, and seemed to have a peculiar dislike to him. An it hadna been the wife, wha was a kind considerate sort of a body, if Tam had gotten his will, it was reckoned he wad hae hungered the lad to dead. After that, Linton left the place, and gaed away, I watna where ; and the country, I believe, came gayan near to the truth o’ the story at last :

“ There was a girl in the Birkhill house at the time, whether a daughter o’ Tam’s, or no, I hae forgot, though I think otherwise. However, she durstna for her life tell a’ she kenn’d as lang as the investigation was gaun on ; but it at last spunkit out that Rob Dodds had got hame safe enough ; and that Tam got

into a great rage at him, because he had not brought a burden o' peats, there being none in the house. The youth excused himself on the score of fatigue and hunger; but Tam swore at him, and said, 'The deil be in your teeth, gin they shall break bread, till ye gang back out to the hill-head and bring a burden o' peats!' Dodds refused; on which Tam struck him, and forced him away; and he went crying and greeting out at the door, but never came back. She also told, that after poor Rob was lost, Tam tried several times to get at his dog to fell it with a stick; but the creature was terrified for him, and made its escape. It was therefore thought, and indeed there was little doubt, that Rob, through fatigue and hunger, and reckless of death from the way he had been guidit, went out to the hill, and died at the peat stack, the mouth of which was a shelter from the drift-wind; and that his cruel master, conscious o' the way in which he had used him, and dreading skaith, had trailed away the body, and sunk it in some pool in these unfathomable linns, or otherwise concealed it, wi' the intention, that the world might never ken whether the lad was actually dead, or had absconded. If it had not been for the dog, from which it appears he had been unable to conceal it, and the old man's perseverance, to whose search there appeared to be no end, it is probable he would never have laid the body in a place where it

could have been found. But if he had allowed it to remain in the first place of concealment, it might have been discovered by means of the dog, and the intentional concealment of the corpse would then have been obvious ; so that Linton all that time could not be quite at his ease, and it was no wonder he attempted to fell the dog. But where the body could have been deposited, that the faithful animal was never discovered by the searchers, during the day, for the space of ten weeks, baffled a' the conjectures that ever could be made.

“ The two old people, the lad's father and mother, never got over their loss. They never held up their heads again, nor joined in society ony mair, except in attending divine worship. It might be truly said o' them, that they spent the few years that they survived their son in constant prayer and humiliation ; but they soon died, short while after ane anither. As for Tam Linton, he left this part of the country, as I told you ; but it was said there was a curse hung ower him and his a' his life, and that he never mair did weel.—That was the year, master, on which our burn was dammed wi' the dead sheep ; and in fixing the date, you see, I hae been led into a lang story, and am just nae farther wi' the main point than when I began.”

“ I wish from my heart, Andrew, that you would try to fix a great many old dates in the same manner ;

for I confess I am more interested in your lang stories, than in either your lang prayers, or your lang sermons about repentance and amendment. But pray, you were talking of the judgments that overtook Tam Linton—Was that the same Tam Linton that was precipitated from the Brand Law by the break of a snaw-wreath, and he and all his sheep jammed into the hideous gulf, called the Grey Mare's Tail?"

"The very same, sir; and that might be accountit ane o' the first judgments that befell him; for there were many of his ain sheep in the flock. Tam asserted all his life, that he went into the linn along with his hirsel, but no man ever believed him; for there was not one of the sheep came out alive, and how it was possible for the carl to have come safe out, naebody could see. It was, indeed, quite impossible; for it had been such a break of snaw as had scarcely ever been seen. The gulf was crammed sae fu', that ane could hae gane ower it like a pendit brig; and no a single sheep could be gotten out, either dead or living. When the thaw came, the burn wrought a passage for itself below the snaw, but the arch stood till summer. I have heard my father oft describe the appearance of that vault as he saw it on his way from Moffat fair. Ane hadna gane far into it, he said, till it turned darkish, like an ill-hued twilight; and sic a like arch o' carnage he never saw! There were limbs o'

sheep hinging in a' directions, the snaw was wedged sae firm. Some entire carcasses hung by the neck, some by a spauld ; then there was a haill forest o' legs sticking out in ae place, and horns in another, terribly mangled and broken ; and it was a'thegither sic a frightsome-looking place, that he was blithe to get out o't again."

After looking at the sheep, tasting old Janet's best kebbuck, and oatmeal cakes, and preeing the whisky bottle, the young farmer again set out through the deep snow, on his way home. But Andrew made him promise, that if the weather did not amend, he would come back in a few days and see how the poor sheep were coming on ; and, as an inducement, promised to tell him a great many old anecdotes of the shepherd's life.

CHAPTER II.

MR ADAMSON OF LAVERHOPE.

ONE of those events that have made the deepest impression on the shepherds' minds for a century by-gone, seems to have been the fate of Mr Adamson, who was tenant in Laverhope for the space of twenty-seven years. It stands in their calendar as an era from which to date summer floods, water spouts, hail and thunder-storms, &c. ; and appears from tradition to have been attended with some awful circumstances, expressive of divine vengeance. This Adamson is represented, as having been a man of an ungovernable temper—of irritability so extreme, that no person could be for a moment certain to what excesses he might be hurried. He was otherwise accounted a good and upright man, and a sincere Christian ; but in these outbreakings of temper he often committed acts of cruelty and injustice, for which any good man ought to have been ashamed. Among other qualities, he had an obliging disposition, there being few to

whom a poor man would sooner have applied in a strait. Accordingly, he had been in the habit of assisting a less wealthy neighbour of his with a little credit for many years. This man's name was Irvine, and though he had a number of rich relations, he was never out of difficulties. Adamson, from some whim or caprice, sued this poor farmer for a few hundred merks, taking legal steps against him, even to the very last measures short of poinding and imprisonment. Irvine paid little attention to this, taking it for granted that his neighbour took these steps only for the purpose of inducing his debtor's friends to come forward and support him.

It happened one day about this period, that a thoughtless boy, belonging to Irvine's farm, hunted Adamson's cattle in a way that gave great offence to their owner, on which the two farmers differed, and some hard words passed between them. The next day Irvine was seized and thrown into jail; and shortly after, his effects were poinded, and sold by auction for ready money. They were consequently thrown away, as the neighbours, not having been forewarned, were wholly unprovided with ready money, and unable to purchase at any price. Mrs Irvine came to the enraged creditor with a child in her arms, and implored him to put off the sale for a month, that she might try what could be done amongst her friends to prevent

a wreck so irretrievable. He was at one time on the very point of yielding ; but some bitter recollections coming over his mind at the moment, stimulated his spleen against her husband, and he resolved that the sale should go on. William Carruders of Grindiston heard the following dialogue between them ; and he said that his heart almost trembled within him ; for Mrs Irvine was a violent woman, and her eloquence did more harm than good.

“ Are ye really gaun to act the part of a devil, the day, Mr Adamson, and turn me and thae bairns out to the bare high-road, helpless as we are? Oh, man, if your bewels binna seared in hell-fire already, take some compassion ; for an ye dinna, they *will* be seared afore baith men and angels yet, till that hard and cruel heart o’ yours be nealed to an izle.”

“ I’m gaun to act nae part of a devil, Mrs Irvine ; I’m only gaun to take my ain in the only way I can get it. I’m no baith gaun to tine my siller, and hae my beasts abused into the bargain.”

“ Ye sall neither lose plack nor bawbee o’ your siller, man, if ye will gie me but a month to make a shift for it—I swear to you, ye sall neither lose, nor rue the deed. But if ye winna grant me that wee wee while, when the bread of a hail family depends on it, ye’re waur than ony deil that’s yammering and cursing i’ the bottomless pit.”

“Keep your ravings to yoursell, Mrs Irvine, for I hae made up my mind what I’m to do; and I’ll do it; sae it’s needless for ye to pit yoursell into a bleeze; for the sùrest promisers are aye the slackest payers. It isna likely that your bad language will gar me alter my purpose.”

“If that *be* your purpose, Mr Adamson, and if you put that purpose in execution, I wadna change conditions wi’ you the day for ten thousand times a’ the gear ye are worth. Ye’re gaun to do the thing that ye’ll repent only aince—for a’ the time that ye hae to exist baith in this world and the neist, and that’s a lang lang look forrit and ayond. Ye have assisted a poor honest family for the purpose of taking them at a disadvantage, and crushing them to beggars; and when ane thinks o’ that, what a heart you must hae! Ye hae first put my poor man in prison, a place where he little thought, and less deserved, ever to be; and now ye are reaving his sackless family out o’ their last bit o’ bread. Look at this bit bonny innocent thing in my arms, how it is smiling on ye! Look at a’ the rest standing leaning against the wa’s, ilka ane wi’ his een fixed on you by way o’ imploring your pity! If ye reject thae looks, ye’ll see them again in some trying moments, that will bring this ane back to your mind; ye will see them i’ your dreams; ye will see them on your death-bed, and ye will *think* ye see

them gleaming on ye through the reek o' hell,—but it winna be them."

"Haud your tongue, woman, for ye make me feared to hear ye."

"Ay, but better be feared in time, than torfelled for ever! Better conquest your bad humour for aince, than be conquested for it through sae mony lang ages. Ye pretend to be a religious man, Mr Adamson, and a great deal mair sae than your neighbours—do you think that religion teaches you acts o' cruelty like this? Will ye hae the face to kneel afore your Maker the night, and pray for a blessing on you and yours, and that He will forgive you your debts as you forgive your debtors? I hae nae doubt but ye will. But aih! how sic an appeal will heap the coals o' divine vengeance on your head, and tighten the belts o' burning yettlin ower your hard heart! Come forrit, bairns, and speak for yoursells, ilk ane o' ye."

"O, Maister Adamson, ye maunna turn my father and mother out o' their house and their farm; or what think ye is to come o' us?" said Thomas.

No consideration, however, was strong enough to turn Adamson from his purpose. The sale went on; and still, on the calling off of every favourite animal, Mrs Irvine renewed her anathemas.

"Gentlemen, this is the mistress's favourite cow, and gives thirteen pints of milk every day. She is

valued in my roup-roll at fifteen pounds; but we shall begin her at ten. Does any body say ten pounds for this excellent cow? ten pounds—ten pounds? Nobody says ten pounds? Gentlemen, this is extraordinary! Money is surely a scarce article here to-day. Well, then, does any gentleman say five pounds to begin this excellent cow that gives twelve pints of milk daily? Five pounds—only five pounds!—Nobody bids five pounds? Well, the stock must positively be sold without reserve. Ten shillings for the cow—ten shillings—ten shillings—Will nobody bid ten shillings to set the sale a-going?”

“I’ll gie five-and-twenty shillings for her,” cried Adamson.

“Thank you, sir. One pound five—one pound five, and just a-going. Once—twice—*thrice*. Mr Adamson, one pound five.”

Mrs Irvine came forward, drowned in tears, with the babe in her arms, and patting the cow, she said, “Ah, poor lady Bell, this is my last sight o’ you, and the last time I’ll clap your honest side! And hae we really been deprived o’ your support for the miserable sum o’ five-and-twenty shillings?—my curse light on the head o’ him that has done it! In the name of my destitute bairns I curse him; and does he think that a mother’s curse will sink fizenless to the ground? Na, na! I see an ee that’s looking down here in pity

and in anger; and I see a hand that's gathering the bolts o' Heaven thegither, for some purpose that I could divine, but daurna utter. But that hand is unerring, and where it throws the bolt, there it will strike. Fareweel, poor beast! ye hae supplied us wi' mony a meal, but ye will never supply us wi' another."

This sale at Kirkheugh was on the 11th of July. On the day following, Mr Adamson went up to the folds in the hope, to shear his sheep, with no fewer than twenty-five attendants, consisting of all his own servants and cottars, and about as many neighbouring shepherds whom he had collected; it being customary for the farmers to assist one another reciprocally on these occasions. Adamson continued more than usually capricious and unreasonable all that forenoon. He was discontented with himself; and when a man is ill pleased with himself, he is seldom well pleased with others. He seemed altogether left to the influences of the Wicked One, running about in a rage, finding fault with every thing, and every person, and at times cursing bitterly, a practice to which he was not addicted; so that the sheep-shearing, that used to be a scene of hilarity among so many young and old shepherds, lads, lasses, wives, and callants, was that day turned into one of gloom and dissatisfaction.

After a number of other provoking outrages, Adamson at length, with the buisting-iron which he held in

his hand, struck a dog belonging to one of his own shepherd boys, till the poor animal fell senseless on the ground, and lay sprawling as in the last extremity. This brought matters to a point which threatened nothing but anarchy and confusion; for every shepherd's blood boiled with indignation, and each almost wished in his heart that the dog had been his own, that he might have retaliated on the tyrant. At the time the blow was struck, the boy was tending one of the fold-doors, and perceiving the plight of his faithful animal, he ran to its assistance, lifted it in his arms, and holding it up to recover its breath, he wept and lamented over it most piteously. "My poor little Nimble!" he cried; "I am feared that mad body has killed ye, and then what am I to do wanting ye? I wad ten times rather he had stricken mysell!"

He had scarce said the words ere his master caught him by the hair of the head with the one hand, and began to drag him about, while with the other he struck him most unmercifully. When the boy left the fold-door, the unshorn sheep broke out, and got away to the hill among the lambs and the clippies; and the farmer being in one of his "mad tantrums," as the servants called them, the mischance had almost put him beside himself; and that boy, or man either, is in a ticklish case who is in the hands of an enraged person far above him in strength.

The sheep-shearers paused, and the girls screamed, when they saw their master lay hold of the boy. But Robert Johnston, a shepherd from an adjoining farm, flung the sheep from his knee, made the shears ring against the fold-dike, and in an instant had the farmer by both wrists, and these he held with such a grasp, that he took the power out of his arms; for Johnston was as far above the farmer in might, as the latter was above the boy.

“ Mr Adamson, what are ye about?” he cried; “ hae ye tint your reason a’thegither, that ye are gaun on rampaung like a madman that gate? Ye hae done the thing, sir, in your ill-timed rage, that ye ought to be ashamed of baith afore God and man.”

“ Are ye for fighting, Rob Johnston?” said the farmer, struggling to free himself. “ Do ye want to hae a fight, lad? Because if ye do, I’ll maybe gie you enough o’ that.”

“ Na, sir, I dinna want to fight; but I winna let you fight either, unless wi’ ane that’s your equal; sae gie ower spraughling, and stand still till I speak to ye; for an ye winna stand to hear reason, I’ll gar ye lie till ye hear it. Do ye consider what ye hae been doing even now? Do ye consider that ye hae been striking a poor orphan callant, wha has neither father nor mother to protect him, or to right his wrangs? and a’ for naething, but a bit start o’ natural affection? How wad ye like

sir, an ony body were to guide a bairn o' yours that gate? and ye as little ken what they are to come to afore their deaths, as that boy's parents did when they were rearing and fondling ower him. Fie for shame, Mr Adamson! fie for shame! Ye first strak his poor dumb brute, which was a greater sin than the tither, for it didna ken what ye were striking it for; and then, because the callant ran to assist the only creature he has on the earth, and I'm feared the only true and faithfu' friend beside, ye claight him by the hair o' the head, and fell to the dadding him as he war your slave! Od, sir, my blood rises at sic an act o' cruelty and injustice; and gin I thought ye worth my while, I wad tan ye like a pellet for it."

The farmer struggled and fought so viciously, that Johnston was obliged to throw him down twice over, somewhat roughly, and hold him by main force. But on laying him down the second time, Johnston said, "Now, sir, I just tell ye, that ye deserve to hae your banes weel throoshen; but ye're nae match for me, and I'll scorn to lay a tip on ye. I'll leave ye to Him who has declared himself the stay and shield of the orphan; and gin some visible testimony o' his displeasure dianna come ower ye for the abusing of his ward, I am right sair mista'en."

Adamson, finding himself fairly mastered, and that no one seemed disposed to take his part, was obliged

to give in, and went sullenly away to tend the hirsel that stood beside the fold. In the meantime the sheep-shearing went on as before, with a little more of hilarity and glee. It is the business of the lasses to take the ewes, and carry them from the fold to the clippers; and now might be seen every young shepherd's sweetheart, or favourite, waiting beside him, helping him to clip, or holding the ewes by the hind legs to make them lie easy, a great matter for the furtherance of the operator. Others again, who thought themselves slighted, or loved a joke, would continue to act in a different manner, and plague the youths by bringing them such sheep as it was next to impossible to clip.

"Aih, Jock lad, I hae brought you a grand ane this time! Ye will clank the shears ower her, and be the first done o' them a'!"

"My truly, Jessy, but ye hae gi'en me ane! I declare the beast is woo to the cloots and the een holes; and afore I get the fleece broken up, the rest will be done. Ah, Jessy, Jessy! ye're working for a mischief the day; and ye'll maybe get it."

"She's a braw sonsie sheep, Jock. I ken ye like to hae your arms weel filled. She'll amaist fill them as weel as Tibby Tod."

"There's for it now! there's for it! What care I for Tibby Tod, dame? Ye are the most jealous elf, Jessy, that ever drew coat ower head. But wha was't

that sat half a night at the side of a grey stane wi' a crazy cooper? And wha was't that gae the poor precentor the whiskings, and reduced a' his sharps to downright flats? An ye cast up Tibby Tod ony mair to me, I'll tell something that will gar thae wild een reel i' your head, Mistress Jessy."

"Wow, Jock, but I'm unco wae for ye now. Poor fellow! It's really very hard usage! If ye canna clip the ewe, man, gie me her, and I'll tak her to anither; for I canna bide to see ye sae sair put about. I winna bring ye anither Tibby Tod the day, take my word on it. The neist shall be a real May Henderson o' Firthhope-cleuch—ane, ye ken, wi' lang legs, and a good lamb at her fit."

"Gudesake, lassie, haud your tongue, and dinna affront baith yoursell and me. Ye are fit to gar ane's cheek burn to the bane. I'm fairly quashed, and daurna say anither word. Let us therefore hae let-a-be for let-a-be, which is good bairns's greement, till after the close o' the day sky; and then I'll tell ye my mind."

"Ay, but whilk o' your minds will ye tell me, Jock? For ye will be in five or six different anes afore that time. Ane, to ken your mind, wad need to be tauld it every hour o' the day, and then cast up the account at the year's end. But how wad she settle it then, Jock? I fancy she wad hae to multiply ilk year's

minds by dozens, and divide by four, and then we a' ken what wad be the quotient."

"Aih wow, sirs! heard ever ony o' ye the like o' that? For three things the sheep-fauld is disquieted, and there are four which it cannot bear."

"And what are they, Jock?"

"A witty wench, a woughing dog, a waukit-woo'd wedder, and a pair o' shambling shears."

After this manner did the gleesome chat go on, now that the surly goodman had withdrawn from the scene. But this was but one couple; every pair being engaged according to their biasses, and after their kind—some settling the knotty points of divinity; others telling auld-warld stories about persecutions, forays, and fairy raids; and some whispering, in half sentences, the soft breathings of pastoral love.

But the farmer's bad humour, in the meanwhile was only smothered, not extinguished; and, like a flame that is kept down by an overpowering weight of fuel, wanted but a breath to rekindle it; or like a barrel of gunpowder, that the smallest spark will set in a blaze. That spark unfortunately fell upon it too soon. It came in the form of an old beggar, ycleped Patie Maxwell, a well-known, and generally a welcome guest, over all that district. He came to the folds for his annual present of a fleece of wool, which had never before been denied him; and the farmer being the

first person he came to, he approached him, as in respect bound, accosting him in his wonted obsequious way.

“ Weel, gudeman, how’s a’ wi’ ye the day ? ”—(No answer.)—“ This will be a thrang day w’ye ? How are ye getting on wi’ the clipping ? ”

“ Nae the better o’ you, or the like o’ you. Gang away back the gate ye came. What are ye coming doiting up through amang the sheep that gate for, putting them a’ tersyversy ? ”

“ Tut, gudeman, what does the sheep mind an auld creeping body like me ? I hae done nae ill to your pickle sheep ; and as for ganging back the road I cam, I’ll do that whan I like, and no till than.”

“ But I’ll make you blithe to turn back, auld vagabond ! Do ye imagine I’m gaun to hae a’ my clippers and grippers, buisters and binders, laid half idle, gaffing and giggling wi’ you ? ”

“ Why, then, speak like a reasonable man, and a courteous Christian, as ye used to do, and I’ll crack wi’ yoursell, and no gang near them.”

“ I’ll keep my Christian cracks for others than auld Papist dogs, I trow.”

“ Wha do ye ca’ auld Papist degs, Mr Adamson ? —Wha is it that ye mean to denominate by that fine-sounding title ? ”

“ Just you, and the like o’ ye, Pate. It is weel

kenn'd that ye are as rank a Papist as ever kissed a crosier, and that ye were out in the very fore-end o' the unnatural Rebellion, in order to subvert our religion, and place a Popish tyrant on the throne. It is a shame for a Protestant parish like this to support ye, and gie you as liberal awmoses as ye were a Christian saint. For me, I can tell you, ye'll get nae mae at my hand ; nor nae rebel Papist loun amang ye."

"Dear sir, ye're surely no yoursell the day? Ye hae kenn'd I professed the Catholic religion these thretty years—it was the faith I was brought up in, and that in which I shall dee ; and ye kenn'd a' that time that I was out in the Forty-Five wi' Prince Charles, and yet ye never made mention o' the facts, nor refused me my awmos, till the day. But as I hae been obliged t'ye, I'll haud my tongue ; only, I wad advise ye as a friend, whenever ye hae occasion to speak of ony community of brother Christians, that ye will in future hardly make use o' siccan harsh terms. Or, if ye will do't, tak care wha ye use them afore, and let it no be to the face o' an auld veteran."

"What, ye auld profane wafer-eater, and worshipper of graven images, dare ye heave your pikit kent at me ?"

"I hae heaved baith sword and spear against mony a better man ; and, in the cause o' my religion, I'll do it again."

He was proceeding, but Adamson's choler rising to an ungovernable height, he drew a race, and, running against the gaberlunzie with his whole force, made him fly heels-over-head down the hill. The old man's bonnet flew off, his meal-pocks were scattered about, and his mantle, with two or three small fleeces of wool in it, rolled down into the burn.

The servants observed what had been done, and one elderly shepherd said, "In troth, sirs, our master is no himsell the day. He maun really be looked to. It appears to me, that sin' he roupit out yon poor family yesterday, the Lord has ta'en his guiding arm frae about him. Rob Johnston, ye'll be obliged to rin to the assistance of the auld man."

"I'll trust the auld Jacobite for another shake wi' him yet," said Rob, "afore I steer my fit; for it strikes me, if he hadna been ta'en unawares, he wad hardly hae been sae easily coupit."

The gaberlunzie was considerably astounded and stupified when he first got up his head; but finding all his bones whole, and his old frame disencumbered of every superfluous load, he sprung to his feet, shook his grey burly locks, and cursed the aggressor in the name of the Holy Trinity, the Mother of our Lord, and all the blessed Saints above. Then approaching him with his cudgel heaved, he warned him to be on his guard, or make out of his reach, else he would

send him to eternity in the twinkling of an eye. The farmer held up his staff across, to defend his head against the descent of old Patie's piked kent, and, at the same time, made a break in, with intent to close with his assailant ; but, in so doing, he held down his head for a moment, on which the gaberlunzie made a swing to one side, and lent Adamson such a blow over the neck, or back part of the head, that he fell violently on his face, after running two or three steps precipitately forward. The beggar, whose eyes gleamed with wild fury, while his grey locks floated over them like a winter cloud over two meteors of the night, was about to follow up his blow with another more efficient one on his prostrate foe ; but the farmer, perceiving these unequivocal symptoms of danger, wisely judged that there was no time to lose in providing for his own safety, and, rolling himself rapidly two or three times over, he got to his feet, and made his escape, though not before Patie had hit him what he called " a stiff lounder across the rump."

The farmer fled along the brae, and the gaberlunzie pursued, while the people at the fold were convulsed with laughter. The scene was highly picturesque, for the beggar could run none, and still the faster that he essayed to run, he made the less speed. But ever and anon he stood still, and cursed Adamson in the name of one or other of the Saints or Apostles, brandishing

his cudgel, and stamping with his foot. The other, keeping still at a small distance, pretended to laugh at him, and at the same time uttered such bitter abuse against the Papists in general, and old Patie in particular, that, after the latter had cursed himself into a proper pitch of indignation, he always broke at him again, making vain efforts to reach him one more blow. At length, after chasing him by these starts about half a mile, the beggar returned, gathered up the scattered implements and fruits of his occupation, and came to the fold to the busy group.

Patie's general character was that of a patient, jocular, sarcastic old man, whom people liked, but dared not much to contradict ; but that day his manner and mien had become so much altered, in consequence of the altercation and conflict which had just taken place, that the people were almost frightened to look at him ; and as for social converse, there was none to be had with him. His countenance was grim, haughty, and had something Satanic in its lines and deep wrinkles ; and ever and anon, as he stood leaning against the fold, he uttered a kind of hollow growl, with a broken interrupted sound, like a war-horse neighing in his sleep, and then muttered curses on the farmer.

The old shepherd before-mentioned, ventured, at length, to caution him against such profanity, saying, " Dear Patie, man, dinna sin away your soul, venting

siccan curses as these. They will a' turn back on your ain head ; for what harm can the curses of a poor sin-fu' worm do to our master ?”

“ My curse, sir, has blasted the hopes of better men than either you or him,” said the gaberlunzie, in an earthquake voice, and shivering with vehemence as he spoke. “ Ye may think the like o' me can hae nae power wi' Heaven ; but an I hae power wi' hell, it is sufficient to cow ony that's here. I sanna brag what effect my curse will have, but I shall say this, that either your master, or ony o' his men, had as good have auld Patie Maxwell's blessing as his curse ony time, Jacobite and Roman Catholic though he be.”

It now became necessary to bring into the fold the sheep that the farmer was tending ; and they were the last hirsel that was to shear that day. The farmer's face was reddened with ill-nature ; but yet he now appeared to be somewhat humbled, by reflecting on the ridiculous figure he had made. Patie sat on the top of the fold-dike, and from the bold and hardy asseverations that he made, he seemed disposed to provoke a dispute with any one present who chose to take up the cudgels. While the shepherds, under fire of the gaberlunzie's bitter speeches, were sharpening their shears, a thick black cloud began to rear itself over the height to the southward, the front of which seemed to be boiling—both its outsides rolling rapidly

forward, and again wheeling in toward the centre. I have heard old Robin Johnston, the stout young man mentioned above, but who was a very old man when I knew him, describe the appearance of the cloud as greatly resembling a whirlpool made by the eddy of a rapid tide, or flooded river ; and he declared, to his dying day, that he never saw aught in nature have a more ominous appearance. The gaberlunzie was the first to notice it, and drew the attention of the rest towards that point of the heavens by the following singular and profane remark :—" Aha, lads ! see what's coming yonder. Yonder's Patie Maxwell's curse coming rowing and reeling on ye already ; and what will ye say an the curse of God be coming backing it ?"

" Gudesake, haud your tongue, ye profane body ; ye mak me feared to hear ye," said one.—" It's a strange delusion to think that a Papish can hae ony influence wi' the Almighty, either to bring down his blessing or his curse."

" Ye speak ye ken nae what, man," answered Pate ; " ye hae learned some rhames frae your poor cauld-rife Protestant Whigs about Papists, and Antichrist, and children of perdition ; yet it is plain that ye haena ae spark o' the life or power o' religion in your whole frame, and dinna ken either what's truth or what's falsehood.—Ah ! yonder it is coming, grim and gurly ! Now

I hae called for it, and it is coming, let me see if a' the Protestants that are of ye can order it back, or pray it away again! Down on your knees, ye dogs, and set your mou's up against it, like as many spiritual cannon, and let me see if you have influence to turn aside ane o' the hailstones that the deils are playing at chucks wi' in yon dark chamber!"

"I wadna wonder if our clipping were cuttit short," said one.

"Na, but I wadna wonder if something else were cuttit short," said Patie; "What will ye say an some o' your weazons be cuttit short? Hurraw! yonder it comes! Now, there will be sic a hurly-burly in Laverhope as never was sin' the creation o' man!"

The folds of Laverhope were situated on a gently sloping plain, in what is called "the forkings of a burn." Laver-burn runs to the eastward, and Widehope-burn runs north, meeting the other at a right angle, a little below the folds. It was around the head of this Widehope that the cloud first made its appearance, and there its vortex seemed to be impending. It descended lower and lower, with uncommon celerity, for the elements were in a turmoil. The cloud laid first hold of one height, then of another, till at length it closed over and around the pastoral group, and the dark hope had the appearance of a huge chamber hung with sackcloth. The big clear drops of rain soon began to descend, on

which the shepherds covered up the wool with blankets, then huddled together under their plaids at the side of the fold, to eschew the speat, which they saw was going to be a terrible one. Patie still kept undauntedly to the top of the dike, and Mr Adamson stood cowering at the side of it; with his plaid over his head, at a little distance from the rest. The hail and rain mingled, now began to descend in a way that had been seldom witnessed; but it was apparent to them all that the tempest raged with much greater fury in Widehope-head to the southward.—Anon a whole volume of lightning burst from the bosom of the darkness, and quivered through the gloom, dazzling the eyes of every beholder;—even old Maxwell clapped both his hands on his eyes for a space; a crash of thunder followed the flash, that made all the mountains chatter, and shook the firmament so, that the density of the cloud was broken up; for, on the instant that the thunder ceased, a rushing sound began in Widehope, that soon increased to a loudness equal to the thunder itself; but it resembled the noise made by the sea in a storm. “Holy Virgin!” exclaimed Patie Maxwell, “What is this? What is this? I declare we’re a’ ower lang here, for the dams of heaven are broken up;” and with that he flung himself from the dike, and fled toward the top of a rising ground. He knew that the sound proceeded from the descent of a tremendous water-spout; but the rest, not

conceiving what it was, remained where they were. The storm increased every minute, and in less than a quarter of an hour after the retreat of the gaberlunzie, they heard him calling out with the utmost earnestness ; and when they eyed him, he was jumping like a mad-man on the top of the hillock, waving his bonnet, and screaming out, " Run, ye deil's buckies ! Run for your bare lives ! " One of the shepherds, jumping up on the dike, to see what was the matter, beheld the burn of Widehope coming down in a manner that could be compared to nothing but an ocean, whose boundaries had given way, descending into the abyss. It came with a cataract front more than twenty feet deep, as was afterwards ascertained by measurement ; for it left sufficient marks to enable men to do this with precision. The shepherd called for assistance, and leaped into the fold to drive out the sheep ; and just as he got the foremost of them to take the door, the flood came upon the head of the fold, on which he threw himself over the side-wall, and escaped in safety, as did all the rest of the people.

Not so Mr Adamson's ewes ; the greater part of the hirsel being involved in this mighty current. The large fold nearest the burn was levelled with the earth in one second. Stones, ewes, and sheep-house, all were carried before it, and all seemed to bear the same weight. It must have been a dismal sight, to see so

many fine animals tumbling and rolling in one irresistible mass. They were strong, however, and a few plunged out, and made their escape to the eastward; a greater number were carried headlong down, and thrown out on the other side of Laver-burn, upon the side of a dry hill, to which they all escaped, some of them considerably maimed; but the greatest number of all were lost, being overwhelmed among the rubbish of the fold, and entangled so among the falling dikes, and the torrent wheeling and boiling amongst them, that escape was impossible. The wool was totally swept away, and all either lost, or so much spoiled, that, when afterwards recovered, it was unsaleable.

When first the flood broke in among the sheep, and the women began to run screaming to the hills, and the despairing shepherds to fly about, unable to do any thing, Patie began a-laughing with a loud and hellish guffaw, and in that he continued to indulge till quite exhausted. "Ha, ha, ha, ha! what think ye o' the auld beggar's curse now? Ha, ha, ha, ha! I think it has been backit wi' Heaven's and the deil's baith. Ha, ha, ha, ha!" And then he mimicked the thunder with the most outrageous and ludicrous jabberings, turning occasionally up to the cloud streaming with lightning and hail, and calling out,—“Louder yet, deils! louder yet! Kindle up your crackers, and yerk away! Rap, rap, rap, rap—Ro-ro, ro, ro—Roo—Whush.”

“ I daresay that body’s the vera deevil himsell in the shape o’ the auld Papish beggar !” said one, not thinking that Patie could hear at such a distance.

“ Na, na, lad, I’m no the deil,” cried he in answer ; “ but an I war, I wad let ye see a stramash ! It is a sublime thing to be a Roman Catholic amang sae mony weak apostates ; but it is a sublimer thing still to be a deil—a master-spirit in a forge like yon. Ha, ha, ha, ha ! Take care o’ your heads, ye cock-chickens o’ Calvin—take care o’ the auld Coppersmith o’ the Black Cludd !”

From the moment that the first thunder-bolt shot from the cloud, the countenance of the farmer was changed. He was manifestly alarmed in no ordinary degree ; and when the flood came rushing from the dry mountains, and took away his sheep and his folds before his eyes, he became as a dead man, making no effort to save his store, or to give directions how it might be done. He ran away in a cowering posture, as he had been standing, and took shelter in a little green hollow, out of his servants’ view.

The thunder came nearer and nearer the place where the astonished hinds were, till at length they perceived the bolts of flame striking the earth around them, in every direction ; at one time tearing up its bosom, and at another splintering the rocks. Robin Johnston, in describing it, said, that “ the thunnerbolts came shim-

mering out o' the cludd sae thick, that they appeared to be linkit thegither, and fleeing in a' directions. There war some o' them blue, some o' them red, and some o' them like the colour o' the lowe of a candle ; some o' them diving into the earth, and some o' them springing up out o' the earth and darting into the heaven." I cannot vouch for the truth of this, but I am sure my informer thought it true, or he would not have told it ; and he said farther, that when old Maxwell saw it, he cried—" Fie, tak care, cubs o' hell ! fie, tak care ! cower laigh, and sit sicker ; for your auld dam is aboon ye, and aneath ye, and a' round about ye. O for a good wat nurse to spean ye, like John Adamson's lambs ! Ha, ha, ha !"—The lambs, it must be observed, had been turned out of the fold at first, and none of them perished with their dams.

But just when the storm was at the height, and apparently passing the bounds ever witnessed in these northern climes ; when the embroiled elements were in the state of hottest convulsion, and when our little pastoral group were every moment expecting the next to be their last, all at once a lovely " blue bore," fringed with downy gold, opened in the cloud behind, and in five minutes more the sun again appeared, and all was beauty and serenity. What a contrast to the scene so lately witnessed !

The most remarkable circumstance of the whole

was perhaps the contrast between the two burns. The burn of Laverhope never changed its colour, but continued pure, limpid, and so shallow, that a boy might have stepped over it dry-shod, all the while that the other burn was coming in upon it like an ocean broken loose, and carrying all before it. In mountainous districts, however, instances of the same kind are not infrequent in times of summer speats. Some other circumstances connected with this storm, were also described to me : The storm coming from the south, over a low-lying, wooded, and populous district, the whole of the crows inhabiting it posted away up the glen of Laverhope to avoid the fire and fury of the tempest. "There were thoosands and thoosands came up by us," said Robin, "a' laying theirsells out as they had been mad. And then, whanever the bright bolt played flash through the darkness, ilk áne o' them made a dive and a wheel to avoid the shot : For I was persuaded that they thought a' the artillery and musketry o' the haill coountry were loosed on them, and that it was time for them to tak the gate. There were likewise several colly dogs came by us in great extremity, hinging out their tongues, and looking aye ower their shouthers, rinning straight on they kenn'dna where ; and amang other things, there was a black Highland cow came roaring up the glen, wi' her stake hanging at her neck."

When the gush of waters subsided, all the group, men and women, were soon employed in pulling out dead sheep from among rubbish of stones, banks of gravel, and pools of the burn; and many a row of carcasses was laid out, which at that season were of no use whatever, and of course utterly lost. But all the time they were so engaged, Mr Adamson came not near them; at which they wondered, and some of them remarked, that "they thought their master was fey the day, mae ways than ane."

"Ay, never mind him," said the old shepherd, "he'll come when he thinks it his ain time; he's a right sair humbled man the day, and I hope by this time he has been brought to see his errors in a right light. But the gaberlunzie is lost too. I think he be sandit in the yird, for I hae never seen him sin' the last great crash o' thunner."

"He'll be gane into the howe to wring his duds," said Robert Johnston, "or maybe to make up matters wi' your master. Gude sauf us, what a profane wretch the auld creature is! I didna think the muckle horned deil himsell could hae set up his mou' to the heaven, and braggit and blasphemed in sic a way. He gart my heart a' grue within me, and dirle as it had been bored wi' reid-het elsins."

"Oh, what can ye expect else of a Papish?" said the old shepherd, with a deep sigh. "They're a' deil's

bairns ilk ane, and a' employed in carrying on their father's wark. It is needless to expect gude branches frae sic a stock, or gude fruit frae siccan branches."

"There's ae wee bit text that folks should never lose sight o'," said Robin, "and it's this,—'Judge not, that ye be not judged.' I think," remarked Robin, when he told the story, "I think that steekit their gabs!"

The evening at length drew on; the women had gone away home, and the neighbouring shepherds had scattered here and there to look after their own flocks. Mr Adamson's men alone remained, lingering about the brook and the folds, waiting for their master. They had seen him go into the little green hollow, and they knew he was gone to his prayers, and were unwilling to disturb him. But they at length began to think it extraordinary that he should continue at his prayers the whole afternoon. As for the beggar, though acknowledged to be a man of strong sense and sound judgment, he had never been known to say prayers all his life, except in the way of cursing and swearing a little sometimes; and none of them could conjecture what was become of him. Some of the rest, as it grew late, applied to the old shepherd before oft mentioned, whose name I have forgot, but he had herded with Adamson twenty years—some of the rest, I say, applied to him to go and bring their master away home, thinking that perhaps he was taken ill.

"O, I'm unco laith to disturb him," said the old man; "he sees that the hand o' the Lord has fa'en heavy on him the day, and he's humbling himsell afore him in great bitterness o' spirit, I daresay. I count it a sin to brik in on sic devotions as thae."

"Na, I carena if he should lie and pray yonder till the morn," said a young lad, "only I wadna like to gang hame and leave him lying on the hill, if he should hae chanced to turn no weel. Sae, if nane o' ye will gang and bring him, or see what ails him, I'll e'en gang mysell;" and away he went, the rest standing still to await the issue.

When the lad went first to the brink of the little slack where Adamson lay, he stood a few moments, as if gazing or listening, and then turned his back and fled. The rest, who were standing watching his motions, wondered at this; and they said, one to another, that their master was angry at being disturbed, and had been threatening the lad so rudely, that it had caused him to take to his heels. But what they thought most strange was, that the lad did not fly towards them, but straight to the hill; nor did he ever so much as cast his eyes in their direction; so deeply did he seem to be impressed with what had passed between him and his master. Indeed, it rather appeared that he did not know what he was doing; for, after running a space with great violence, he stood and looked back,

and then broke to the hill again—always looking first over the one shoulder, and then over the other. Then he stopped a second time, and returned cautiously towards the spot where his master reclined ; and all the while he never so much as once turned his eyes in the direction of his neighbours, or seemed to remember that they were there. His motions were strikingly erratic ; for all the way, as he returned to the spot where his master was, he continued to advance by a zigzag course, like a vessel beating up by short tacks ; and several times he stood still, as on the very point of retreating. At length he vanished from their sight in the little hollow.

It was not long till the lad again made his appearance, shouting and waving his cap for them to come likewise ; on which they all went away to him as fast as they could, in great amazement what could be the matter. When they came to the green hollow, a shocking spectacle presented itself : There lay the body of their master, who had been struck dead by the lightning ; and, his right side having been torn open, his bowels had gushed out, and were lying beside the body. The earth was rutted and ploughed close to his side, and at his feet there was a hole scooped out, a full yard in depth, and very much resembling a grave. He had been cut off in the act of prayer, and the body was still lying in the position of a man praying in the

field. He had been on his knees, with his elbows leaning on the brae, and his brow laid on his folded hands ; his plaid was drawn over his head, and his hat below his arm ; and this affecting circumstance proved a great source of comfort to his widow afterwards, when the extremity of her suffering had somewhat abated.

No such awful visitation of Providence had ever been witnessed, or handed down to our hinds on the ample records of tradition, and the impression which it made, and the interest it excited, were also without a parallel. Thousands visited the spot, to view the devastations made by the flood, and the furrows formed by the electrical matter ; and the smallest circumstances were inquired into with the most minute curiosity : above all, the still and drowsy embers of superstition were rekindled by it into a flame, than which none had ever burnt brighter, not even in the darkest days of ignorance ; and by the help of it a theory was made out and believed, that for horror is absolutely unequalled. But as it was credited in its fullest latitude by my informant, and always added by him at the conclusion of the tale, I am bound to mention the circumstances, though far from vouching them to be authentic.

It was asserted, and pretended to have been proved, that old Peter Maxwell *was not in the glen of Laverhope that day*, but at a great distance in a different

county, and that it was the devil who attended the folds in his likeness. It was farther believed by all the people at the folds, that it was the last explosion of the whole that had slain Mr Adamson; for they had at that time observed the side of the brae, where the little green slack was situated, covered with a sheet of flame for a moment. And it so happened, that thereafter the profane gaberlunzie had been no more seen; and therefore they said—and here was the most horrible part of the story—there was no doubt of his being the devil, waiting for his prey, and that he fled away in that sheet of flame, carrying the soul of John Adamson along with him.

I never saw old Pate Maxwell,—for I believe he died before I was born; but Robin Johnston said, that to his dying day, he denied having been within forty miles of the folds of Laverhope on the day of the thunder-storm, and was exceedingly angry when any one pretended to doubt the assertion. It was likewise reported, that at six o'clock afternoon a stranger had called on Mrs Irvine, and told her, that John Adamson, and a great part of his stock, had been destroyed by the lightning and the hail. Mrs Irvine's house was five miles distant from the folds; and more than that, the farmer's death was not so much as known of by mortal man until two hours after Mrs Irvine received this information. The storm exceeded

any thing remembered, either for its violence or consequences, and these mysterious circumstances having been bruited abroad, gave it a hold on the minds of the populace, never to be erased but by the erasure of existence. It fell out on the 12th of July, 1753.

The death of Mr Copland of Minnigapp, in Annandale, forms another era of the same sort. It happened, if I mistake not, on the 18th of July, 1804. It was one of those days by which all succeeding thunder-storms have been estimated, and from which they are dated, both as having taken place so many years before, and so long after.

Adam Copland, Esquire, of Minnigapp, was a gentleman esteemed by all who knew him. Handsome in his person, and elegant in his manners, he was the ornament of rural society, and the delight of his family and friends ; and his loss was felt as no common misfortune. As he occupied a pastoral farm of considerable extent, his own property, he chanced likewise to be out at his folds on the day above-mentioned, with his own servants, and some neighbours, weaning a part of his lambs, and shearing a few sheep. About mid-day the thunder, lightning, and hail, came on, and deranged their operations entirely ; and, among other things, a part of the lambs broke away from the folds, and being in great fright, they continued to run on. Mr Copland and a shepherd of his, named Thomas

Scott, pursued them, and, at the distance of about half a mile from the folds, they turned them, mastered them, after some running, and were bringing them back to the fold, when the dreadful catastrophe happened. Thomas Scott was the only person present, of course ; and though he was within a few steps of his master at the time, he could give no account of any thing. I am well acquainted with Scott, and have questioned him about the particulars fifty times ; but he could not so much as tell me how he got back to the fold ; whether he brought the lambs with him or not ; how long the storm continued ; nor, indeed, any thing after the time that his master and he turned the lambs. That circumstance he remembered perfectly, but thenceforward his mind seemed to have become a blank. I should likewise have mentioned, as an instance of the same kind of deprivation of consciousness, that when the young lad who went first to the body of Adamson was questioned why he fled from the body at first, he denied that ever he fled ; he was not conscious of having fled a foot, and never would have believed it, if he had not been seen by four eye-witnesses. The only things of which Thomas Scott had any impressions were these : that, when the lightning struck his master, he sprung a great height into the air, much higher, he thought, than it was possible for any man to leap by his own exertion. He also thinks,

that the place where he fell dead was at a considerable distance from that on which he was struck and leaped from the ground ; but when I inquired if he judged that it would be twenty yards or ten yards, he could give no answer—he could not tell. He only had an impression that he saw his master spring into the air, all on fire ; and, on running up to him, he found him quite dead. If Scott was correct in this, (and he being a man of plain good sense, truth, and integrity, there can scarce be a reason for doubting him,) the circumstance would argue that the electric matter by which Mr Copland was killed issued out of the earth. He was speaking to Scott with his very last breath ; but all that the survivor could do, he could never remember what he was saying. Some melted drops of silver were standing on the case of his watch, as well as on some of the buttons of his coat, and the body never stiffened like other corpses, but remained as supple as if every bone had been softened to jelly. He was a married man, scarcely at the prime of life, and left a young widow and only son to lament his loss. On the spot where he fell there is now an obelisk erected to his memory, with a warning text on it, relating to the shortness and uncertainty of human life.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

“BRING me my pike-staff, daughter Matilda,—the one with the head turned round like crummy’s horn ; I find it easiest for my hand. And do you hear, Matty ?—Stop, I say ; you are always in such a hurry. —Bring me likewise my best cloak,—not the tartan one, but the grey marled one, lined with green flannel. I go over to Shepherd Gawin’s to-day, to see that poor young man who is said to be dying.”

“I would not go, father, were I you. He is a great reprobate, and will laugh at every good precept ; and, more than that, you will heat yourself with the walk, get cold, and be confined again with your old complaint.”

“What was it you said, daughter Matilda ? Ah, you said that which was very wrong. God only knows who are reprobates, and who are not. We can judge from nought but external evidence, which is a false ground to build calculations upon ; but He knows the

heart, with all our motives of action, and judges very differently from us. You said very wrong, daughter. But women will always be speaking unadvisedly. Always rash ! always rash !—Bring me my cloak, daughter, for as to my being injured by my walk, I am going on my Master's business ; my life and health are in his hands, and let him do with me as seemeth good in his sight ; I will devote all to his service the little while I have to sojourn here."

" But this young man, father, is not only wicked himself, but he delights in the wickedness of others. He has ruined all his associates, and often not without toiling for it with earnest application. Never did your own heart yearn more over the gaining of an immortal soul to God and goodness, than this same young profligate's bosom has yearned over the destruction of one."

" Ah ! it is a dismal picture, indeed ! but not, perhaps, so bad as you say. Women are always disposed to exaggerate, and often let their tongues outrun their judgments. Bring me my cloak and my staff, daughter Mat. Though God withdraw his protecting arm from a fellow-creature for a time, are we to give all up for lost ? Do you not know that his grace aboundeth to the chief of sinners ?"

" I know more of this youth than you do, my dear father ; would to Heaven I knew less ! and I advise you to stay at home, and leave him to the mercy of

know that he has most basely betrayed his sister, your darling Euphemia."

Old Isaac's head sunk down, while some tears involuntarily dropped on his knee; and to conceal his emotion, he remained silent, save that he uttered a few stifled groans. Natural affection and duty were at strife within him, and for a time neither of them would yield. His daughter perceived the struggle, and contented herself with watching its effects.

"Where is my cloak, daughter Matilda?" said he, at length, without raising his head.

"It is hanging on one of the wooden knags in the garret, sir," said she.

"Ay. Then you may let it hang on the knag where it is all day. It is a weary world this! and we are all guilty creatures! I fear I cannot converse and pray with the ruthless seducer of both my children."

"Your resolution is prudent, sir. All efforts to regain such a one are vain. He is not only a reprobate, and an outcast from his Maker, but a determined and avowed enemy to his laws and government."

"You do not know what you say, daughter," said old Isaac, starting to his feet, and looking her sternly in the face. "If I again hear you presume to prejudge any accountable and immortal being in such a manner, I shall be more afraid of your own state than of his. While life remains, we are in a land where re-

light on the head of my father," said Matilda, as she followed with her eye the bent figure of the old man hasting with tottering steps over the moor, on the road that led to Shepherd Gawin's ; and when he vanished from her view on the height, she wiped her eyes, drew the window screen, and applied herself to her work.

Isaac lost sight of his own home, and came in view of Shepherd Gawin's at the same instant ; but he only gave a slight glance back to his own, for the concern that lay before him dwelt on his heart. It was a concern of life and death, not only of a temporal, but of a spiritual and eternal nature ; and where the mortal concerns are centred, on that place, or towards that place, will the natural eye be turned. Isaac looked only at the dwelling before him : All wore a solemn stillness about the place that had so often resounded with rustic mirth ; the cock crowed not at the door as was his wont, nor strutted on the top of his old dunghill, that had been accumulating there for ages, and had the appearance of a small green mountain ; but he sat on the kailyard dike, at the head of his mates, with his feathers ruffled, and every now and then his one eye turned up to the sky, as if watching some appearance there of which he stood in dread. The blithesome colliers came not down the green to bark and frolic half in kindness and half in jealousy ; they lay coiled up on the shelf of the hay-stack, and as the stran-

ger approached, lifted up their heads and viewed him with a sullen and sleepy eye, then, uttering a low and stifled growl, muffled their heads again between their hind feet, and shrouded their social natures in the very depth of sullenness.

“ This is either the abode of death, or deep mourning, or perhaps both,” said old Isaac to himself, as he approached the house ; “ and all the domestic animals are affected by it, and join in the general dismay.” If this young man has departed with the eyes of his understanding blinded, I have not been in the way of my duty. It is a hard case that a blemished lamb should be cast out of the flock, and no endeavour made by the shepherd to heal or recall it ; that the poor stray thing should be left to perish, and lost to its Master’s fold. It behoveth not a faithful shepherd to suffer this ; and yet—Isaac, thou art the man ! May the Lord pardon his servant in this thing !”

The scene continued precisely the same until Isaac reached the solitary dwelling. There was no one passing in or out by the door, nor any human creature to be seen stirring, save a little girl, one of the family, who had been away meeting the carrier to procure some medicines, and who approached the house by a different path. Isaac was first at the door, and on reaching it he heard a confused noise within, like the sounds of weeping and praying commingled. Unwill-

ing to break in upon them, ignorant as he was how matters stood with the family, he paused, and then with a soft step retreated to meet the little girl that approached, and make some inquiries of her. She tried to elude him by running past him at a little distance, but he asked her to stop and tell him how all was within. She did not hear what he said, but guessing the purport of his inquiry, answered, "He's nae better, sir."—"Ah me ! still in the same state of suffering ?"—"Aih no,—no ae grain,—I tell ye he's nae better ava." And with that she stepped into the house, Isaac following close behind her, so that he entered without being either seen or announced. The first sounds that he could distinguish were the words of the dying youth; they had a hoarse whistling sound, but they were the words of wrath and indignation. As he crossed the hallan he perceived the sick man's brother, the next to him in age, sitting at the window with his elbow leaning on the table, and his head on his closed fist, while the tints of sorrow and anger seemed mingled on his blunt countenance. Farther on stood his mother and elder sister leaning on each other, and their eyes shaded with their hands, and close by the sick youth's bedside ; beyond these kneeled old Gawin the shepherd, his fond and too indulgent father. He held the shrivelled hand of his son in his, and with the other that of a damsel who stood by his side : And Isaac heard

him conjuring his son in the name of the God of heaven. Here old Isaac's voice interrupted the affecting scene. "Peace be to this house,—may the peace of the Almighty be within its walls," said he, with an audible voice. The two women uttered a stifled shriek, and the dying man a "Poh! poh!" of abhorrence. Old Gawin, though he did not rise from his knees, gazed round with amazement in his face; and looking first at his dying son, and then at old Isaac, he drew a full breath, and said, with a quivering voice, "Surely the hand of the Almighty is in this!"

There was still another object in the apartment well worthy of the attention of him who entered—it was the damsel who stood at the bedside; but then she stood with her back to Isaac, so that he could not see her face, and at the sound of his voice, she drew her cloak over her head, and retired behind the bed, sobbing so, that her bosom seemed like to rend. The cloak was similar to the one worn that day by old Isaac, for, be it remembered, he had not the gaudy tartan one about him, but the russet grey plaid made to him by his beloved daughter. Isaac saw the young woman retiring behind the bed, and heard her weeping; but a stroke like that of electricity seemed to have affected the nerves of all the rest of the family on the entrance of the good old man, so that his attention was attracted by those immediately under his eye. The mother and

daughter whispered to each other in great perplexity. Old Gawin rose from his knees ; and not knowing well what to say or do, he diligently wiped the dust from the knee-caps of his corduroy breeches, even descending to the minutiae of scraping away some specks more adhesive than the rest, with the nail of his mid finger. No one welcomed the old man, and the dying youth in the bed grumbled these bitter words, " I see now on what errand Ellen was sent ! Confound your officiousness !"

" No, Graham, you are mistaken. The child was at T——r to meet the carrier for your drugs," said old Gawin.

" Poh ! poh ! all of a piece with the rest of the stuff you have told me. Come hither, Ellen, and let me see what the doctor has sent."—The girl came near, and gave some vials with a sealed direction.

" So you got these at T——r, did you ?"

" Yes, I got them from Jessy Clapperton ; the carrier was away."

" Lying imp ! who told you to say that ? Answer me !"—The child was mute and looked frightened.—

" Oh ! I see how it is ! You have done very well, my dear, very cleverly, you give very fair promise. Get me some clothes, pray—I will try if I can leave this house."

" Alas, my good friends, what is this ?" said Isaac ;

"the young man's reason, I fear, is wavering. Good Gawin, why do you not give me your hand? I am extremely sorry for your son's great bodily sufferings, and for what you and your family must suffer mentally on his account. How are you?"

"Right weel, sir—as weel as may be expected," said Gawin, taking old Isaac's hand, but not once lifting his eyes from the ground to look the good man in the face.

"And how are you, good dame?" continued Isaac, shaking hands with the old woman.

"Right weel, thanks t'ye, sir. It is a cauld day this. Ye'll be cauld?"

"Oh no, I rather feel warm."

"Ay, ye have a comfortable plaid for a day like this; a good plaid it is."

"I like to hear you say so, Agnes, for that plaid was a Christmas present to me, from one who has now been several years in the cold grave. It was made to me by my kind and beloved daughter Euphy. But enough of this—I see you have some mantles in the house of the very same kind."

"No; not the same. We have none of the same here."

"Well, the same or nearly so,—it is all one. My sight often deceives me now."—The family all looked at one another.—"But enough of this," continued old

Isaac, "I came not thus far to discuss such matters. The sick young man, from what I heard, I fear, is incapable of spiritual conversation?"

"Yes, I am," said he, from the bed, with a squeaking voice; "and I would this moment that I were dead! Why don't you give me my clothes? Sure never was a poor unfortunate being tormented as I am! Won't you have pity on me, and let me have a little peace for a short time? It is not long I will trouble you. Is it not mean and dastardly in you all to combine against an object that cannot defend himself?"

"Alack, alack!" said old Isaac, "the calmness of reason is departed for the present. I came to converse a little with him on that which concerns his peace here, and his happiness hereafter: to hold the mirror up to his conscience, and point out an object to him, of which, if he take not hold, all his hope is a wreck."

"I knew it! I knew it!" vociferated the sick man. "A strong and great combination: but I'll defeat it,—ha, ha, ha! I tell you, Father Confessor, I have no right or part in the object you talk of. I will have no farther concern with her. She shall have no more of me than you shall have. If the devil should have all, that is absolute—Will that suffice?"

"Alas! he is not himself," said old Isaac, "and has nearly been guilty of blasphemy. We must not

two tears fall on the board, which he formed with his forefinger into the initials of his name; the little girl looked from one to another, and wondered what ailed them all, then casting down her eyes, she tried to look devout, but they would not be restrained. The dying youth, who at the beginning testified the utmost impatience, by degrees became the most affected of all. His features first grew composed, then rueful, and finally he turned himself on his face in humble prostration. Isaac pleaded fervently with the Almighty, that the sufferer's days might be lengthened, and that he might not be cut off in the bloom of youth, and exuberance of levity—at that season when man is more apt to speak than calculate, and to act than consider, even though speech should be crime, and action irretrievable ruin. “Spare and recover him, O merciful Father, yet for a little while,” said he, “that he may have his eyes opened to see his ruined state both by nature and by wicked works; for who among us liveth and sinneth not, and what changes may be made in his dispositions in a few years or a few months by thy forbearance? Thou takest no pleasure in the death of sinners, but rather that all should repent, and turn unto thee, and live; therefore, for his immortal soul's sake, and for the sake of what thy Son hath suffered for ruined man, spare him till he have time and space to repent. Should his youthful mind have been tainted

with the prevailing vice of infidelity, so that he hath been tempted to lift up his voice against the most sacred truths ; and should he, like all the profane, have been following his inclinations rather than his judgment, how is he now prepared to abide the final result ? or to be ushered into the very midst of those glorious realities which he hath hitherto treated as a fiction ? And how shall he stand before thee, when he discovers, too late, that there is indeed a God, whose being and attributes he hath doubted, a Saviour whom he hath despised, a heaven into which he cannot enter, and a hell which he can never escape ? Perhaps he hath been instrumental in unhinging the principles of others, and of misleading some unwary being from the paths of truth and holiness ; and in the flush of reckless depravity, may even have deprived some innocent, loving, and trusting being of virtue, and left her a prey to sorrow and despair ; and with these and more grievous crimes on his head,—all unrepented and unatoned,—how shall he appear before thee ?”

At this part of the prayer, the sobs behind the bed became so audible, that it made the old man pause in the midst of his fervent supplications ; and the dying youth was heard to weep in suppressed breathings. Isaac went on, and prayed still for the sufferer as one insensible to all that passed ; but he prayed so earnestly for his forgiveness, for the restoration of his right

reason, and for health and space for repentance and amendment, that the sincerity of his heart was apparent in every word and every tone.

When he rose from his knees there was a deep silence; no one knew what to say, or to whom to address himself; for the impression made on all their minds was peculiarly strong. The only motion made for a good while was by the soft young man at the table, who put on his bonnet as he was wont to do after prayers; but remembering that the Minister was present, he slipped it off again by the ear, as if he had been stealing it from his own head. At that instant the dying youth stretched out his hand. Isaac saw it, and looking to his mother, said he wanted something. "It is yours—your hand that I want," said the youth, in a kind and expressive tone. Isaac started, he had judged him to be in a state of delirium, and his surprise may be conceived when he heard him speak with calmness and composure. He gave him his hand, but from what he had heard fall from his lips before, knew not how to address him. "You *are* a good man," said the youth, "God in heaven reward you!"

"What is this I hear?" cried Isaac, breathless with astonishment. "Have the disordered senses been rallied in one moment? Have our unworthy prayers indeed been heard at the throne of Omnipotence, and answered so suddenly? Let us bow ourselves with

gratitude and adoration. And for thee, my dear young friend, be of good cheer; for there are better things intended towards thee. Thou shalt yet live to repent of thy sins, and to become a chosen vessel of mercy in the house of him that saved thee."

"If I am spared in life for a little while," said the youth, "I shall make atonement for some of my transgressions, for the enormity of which I am smitten to the heart."

"Trust to no atonement you can make of yourself," cried Isaac fervently. "It is a bruised reed, to which, if you lean, it will go into your hand and pierce it; a shelter that will not break the blast. You must trust to a higher atonement, else your repentance shall be as stubble, or as chaff that the wind carrieth away."

"So disinterested!" exclaimed the youth. "Is it my wellbeing alone over which your soul yearns? This is more than I expected to meet with in humanity! Good father, I am unable to speak more to you to-day, but give me your hand, and promise to come back to see me on Friday. If I am spared in life, you shall find me all that you wish, and shall never more have to charge me with ingratitude."

In the zeal of his devotion, Isaac had quite forgot all personal injuries; he did not even remember that there were such beings as his grandchildren in existence at that time; but when the young man said,

that " he should find him all that he wished, and that he would no more be ungrateful," the sobs and weeping behind the bed grew so audible, that all farther exchange of sentiments was interrupted. The youth grasped old Isaac's hand, and motioned for him to go away; and he was about to comply, out of respect for the feelings of the sufferer, but before he could withdraw his hand from the bed, or rise from the seat on which he had just sat down, the weeping fair one burst from behind the bed; and falling on his knees with her face, she seized his hand with both hers, kissed it an hundred times, and bathed it all over with her tears. Isaac's heart was at all times soft, and at that particular time he was in a mood to be melted quite; he tried to soothe the damsel, though he himself was as much affected as she was—but as her mantle was still over her head, how could he know her? His old dim eyes were, moreover, so much suffused with tears, that he did not perceive that mantle to be the very same with his own, and that one hand must have been the maker of both. " Be comforted," said old Isaac; " he will mend—He will mend, and be yet a stay to you and to them all—be of good comfort, dear love."

When he had said this, he wiped his eyes hastily and impatiently with the lap of his plaid, seized his old pike-staff; and as he tottered across the floor, drawing up his plaid around his waist, its purple rus-

tic colours caught his eye, dim as it was ; and he perceived that it was not his tartan one with the gaudy spangles, but the grey marled one that was made to him by his beloved daughter. Who can trace the links of association in the human mind ? The chain is more angled, more oblique, than the course marked out by the bolt of heaven—as momentarily formed, and as quickly lost. In all cases, they are indefinable, but on the mind of old age, they glance like dreams and visions of something that have been, and are for ever gone. The instant that Isaac's eye fell on his mantle, he looked hastily and involuntarily around him, first on the one side and then on the other, his visage manifesting trepidation and uncertainty. “ Pray what have you lost, sir ? ” said the kind and officious dame. “ I cannot tell what it was that I missed,” said old Isaac, “ but methought I felt as if I had left something behind me that was mine.” Isaac went away, but left not a dry eye in the dwelling which he quitted.

On leaving the cottage he was accompanied part of the way by Gawin, in whose manner there still remained an unaccountable degree of embarrassment. His conversation laboured under a certain restraint, inasmuch that Isaac, who was an observer of human nature, could not help taking notice of it ; but those who have never witnessed, in the same predicament, a home-bred, honest countryman, accustomed to speak his

thoughts freely at all times, can form no conception of the appearance that Gawin made. From the time that the worthy old man first entered his cot, till the time they parted again on the height, Gawin's lips were curled, the one up, and the other down, leaving an inordinate extent of teeth and gums displayed between them; whenever his eyes met those of his companion, they were that instant withdrawn, and, with an involuntary motion, fixed on the summit of some of the adjacent hills; and when they stopped to converse, Gawin was always laying on the ground with his staff, or beating some unfortunate thistle all to pieces. The one family had suffered an injury from the other, of a nature so flagrant in Gawin's eyes, that his honest heart could not brook it; and yet so delicate was the subject, that when he essayed to mention it, his tongue refused the office. "There has a sair misfortune happened," said he once, "that ye aiblins dinna ken o'.—But it's nae matter ava!" And with that he fell on and beat a thistle, or some other opposing shrub, most unmercifully.

There was, however, one subject on which he spoke with energy, and that was the only one in which old Isaac was for the time interested. It was his son's religious state of mind. He told Isaac, that he had formed a correct opinion of the youth, and that he was indeed a scoffer at religion, because it had become fa-

shionable in certain college classes, where religion was never mentioned but with ridicule ; but that his infidelity sprang from a perverse and tainted inclination, in opposition to his better judgment, and that if he could have been brought at all to think or reason on the subject, he would have thought and reasoned aright ; this, however, he had avoided by every means, seeming horrified at the very mention of the subject, and glad to escape from the tormenting ideas that it brought in its train.—“ Even the sight of your face to-day,” continued Gawin, “ drove him into a fit of temporary derangement. But from the unwonted docility he afterwards manifested, I have high hopes that this visit of yours will be accompanied by the blessing of Heaven. He has been a dear lad to me ; for the sake of getting him forret in his lair, I hae pinched baith mysell and a’ my family, and sitten down wi’ them to mony a poor and scrimpit meal. But I never grudged that, only I hae whiles been grieved that the rest o’ my family hae gotten sae little justice in their schooling. And yet, puir things, there has never ane o’ them grieved my heart,—which he has done aftener than I like to speak o’. It has pleased Heaven to punish me for my partiality to him ; but I hae naething for it but submission.—Ha ! do ye ken, sir, that that day I first saw him mount a poopit, and heard him begin a discourse to a croudit congregation, I thought a’

my pains and a' my pinching poverty overpaid. For the first quarter of an hour I was sae upliftit, that I hardly kenn'd whether I was sitting, standing, or flying in the air, or whether the kirk was standing still, or rinnin round about. But, alake ! afore the end o' his twa discourses, my heart turned as cauld as lead, and it has never again hett in my breast sinsyne. They were twa o' thae cauldrie moral harangues, that tend to uplift poor wrecked, degenerate human nature, and rin down divine grace. There was nae dependence to be heard tell o' there, beyond the weak arm o' sinfu' flesh ; and oh, I thought to mysell, that will afford sma' comfort, my man, to either you or me, at our dying day !"

Here the old shepherd became so much overpowered, that he could not proceed, and old Isaac took up the discourse, and administered comfort to the sorrowing father : then shaking him kindly by the hand, he proceeded on his way, while Gawin returned slowly homeward, still waging war with every intrusive and superfluous shrub in his path. He was dissatisfied with himself because he had not spoken his mind to a person who so well deserved his confidence, on a subject that most of all preyed on his heart.

Matilda, who sat watching the path by which her father was to return home, beheld him as soon as he came in view, and continued to watch him all the way with that tender solicitude which is only prompted by

assured her of the contrary—his right-hand sleeve was wringing wet ; and there was even a dampness between his shoulders, which was exceedingly dangerous, as it was so nearly opposite the heart. In short, old Isaac's whole apparel had to be shifted piecemeal, though not without some strong remonstrances on his part, and the good-natured quotation, several times repeated, from the old song :

“ Nought's to be won at woman's hand,
Unless ye gie her a' the plea.”

When she had got him all made comfortable to her mind, and his feet placed in slippers well-toasted before the fire, she then began her inquiries. “ How did you find all at Gawin's to-day, now when I have gotten time to speir ?”

“ Why, daughter Matty, poorly enough, very poorly. But, thanks be to God, I think I left them somewhat better than I found them.”

“ I am so glad to hear that ! I hope you have taken Graham over the coals about Phemy ?”

“ Eh ! about Phemy ?”

“ You know what I told you before you went away ? You were not so unnatural as to forget your own flesh and blood, in communing with the man who has wronged her ?”

“ I did not think more of the matter ; and if I had, there would have been no propriety in mentioning it,

as none of the family spoke of it to me. And how was I assured that there was no mis-statement? Women are always so rash-spoken, and so fond of exaggeration, that I am afraid to trust them at the first word; and besides, my dear Matty, you know they are apt to see things double sometimes."

"Well, my dear father, I must say that your wit, or raillery, is very ill timed, considering whom it relates to. Your grand-daughter has been most basely deceived, under a pretence of marriage; and yet you will break your jokes on the subject!"

"You know, Matty, I never broke a joke on such a subject in my life. It was you whom I was joking; for your news cannot always be depended on. If I were to take up every amour in the parish, upon the faith of your first hints, and to take the delinquents over the coals, as you recommend, I should often commit myself sadly."

Matilda was silenced. She asked for no instances, in order to deny the insinuation; but she murmured some broken sentences, like one who has been fairly beat in an argument, but is loath to yield. It was rather a hard subject for the good lady; for ever since she had bidden adieu to her thirtieth year, she had become exceedingly jealous of the conduct of the younger portion of her sex. But Isaac was too kind-hearted to exult in a severe joke; he instantly added, as a palli-

ative, " But I should hold my tongue. You have many means of hearing, and coming to the truth of such matters, that I have not."

" I wish this were false, however," said Matilda, turning away her face from the fire, lest the flame should scorch her cheek ; " but I shall say no more about it, and neither, I suppose, will you, till it be out of time. Perhaps it may not be true, for I heard, since you went away, that she was to be there to-day, by appointment of his parents, to learn his final determination, which may be as much without foundation as the other part of the story. If she had been there, you must have seen her, you know."

" Eh?" said Isaac, after biting his lip, and making a long pause ; " What did you say, daughter Matty? Did you say my Phemy was to have been there to-day?"

" I heard such a report, which must have been untrue, because, had she been there, you would have met with her."

" There was a lass yonder," said Isaac. " How many daughters has Gawin?"

" Only one who is come the length of woman, and whom you see in the kirk every day capering with her bobbs of crimson ribbons, and looking at Will Ferguson."

" It is a pity women are always so censorious," said

Isaac—"always construing small matters the wrong way. It is to be hoped these little constitutional failings will not be laid to their charge.—So Gawin has but one daughter?"

"I said, one that is a grown-up woman. He has, besides, little Ellen; a pert idle creature, who has an eye in her head that will tell tales some day."

"Then there was indeed another damsel," said old Isaac, "whom I did not know, but took her for one of the family. Alake, and wo is me! Could I think it was my own dear child hanging over the couch of a dying man! The girl that I saw was in tears, and deeply affected. She even seized my hand, and bathed it with tears. What could she think of me, who neither named nor kissed her, but that I had cast her off and renounced her? But no, no, I can never do that; I will forgive her as heartily as I would beg for her forgiveness at the throne of mercy. We are all fallible and offending creatures; and a young maid, that grows up as a willow by the water-courses, and who is in the flush of youth and beauty, ere ever she has had a moment's time for serious reflection, or one trial of worldly experience—that such a one should fall a victim to practised guilt, is a consequence so natural, that, however deeply to be regretted, it is not matter of astonishment. Poor misguided Phemy! Did you indeed kneel at my knee, and bathe my hand with your affec-

tionate tears, without my once deigning to acknowledge you? And yet how powerful are the workings of nature! They are indeed the workings of the Deity himself: for when I arose, all unconscious of the presence of my child, and left her weeping, I felt as if I had left a part of my body and blood behind me."

"So she was indeed there, whining and whimpering over her honourable lover?" said Matilda. "I wish I had been there, to have told her a piece of my mind! The silly, inconsiderate being, to allow herself to be deprived of fair fame and character by such a worthless profligate, bringing disgrace on all connected with her! And then to go whimpering over his sick-bed! —O dear love, you must marry me, or I am undone! I have *loved* you with all my heart, you know, and you must make me your wife. I am content to beg my bread with you, now that I have *loved* you so dearly! only you must marry me. Oh dear! Oh dear! what shall become of me else!"

"Dear daughter Matilda, where is the presumptuous being of the fallen race of Adam who can say, Here will I stand in my own strength? What will the best of us do, if left to ourselves, better than the erring, inexperienced being, whose turning aside you so bitterly censure? It is better that we lament the sins and failings of our relatives, my dear Matty, than rail

against them, putting ourselves into sinful passion, and thereby adding one iniquity to another."

The argument was kept up all that evening, and all next day, with the same effect; and if either of the disputants had been asked what it was about, neither could have told very precisely: the one attached a blame, which the other did not deny; only there were different ways of speaking about it. On the third day, which was Friday, old Isaac appeared at breakfast in his Sunday clothes, giving thus an intimation of a second intended visit to the house of Gawin the shepherd. The first cup of tea was scarcely poured out, till the old subject was renewed, and the debate seasoned with a little more salt than was customary between the two amiable disputants. Matilda disapproved of the visit, and tried, by all the eloquence she was mistress of, to make it appear indecorous. Isaac defended it on the score of disinterestedness and purity of intention; but finding himself hard pressed, he brought forward his promise, and the impropriety of breaking it. Matty would not give up her point; she persisted in it, till she spoiled her father's breakfast, made his hand shake so, that he could scarcely put the cup to his head, and, after all, staggered his resolution so much, that at last he sat in silence, and Matty got all to say herself. She now accounted the conquest certain, and valuing herself on the influence she possessed, she began to overburden

her old father with all manner of kindness and teasing officiousness. Would he not take this, and refrain from that, and wear one part of dress in preference to another that he had on? There was no end of controversy with Isaac, however kind might be the intent. All that he said at that time was, "Let me alone, dear Matty; let me have some peace. Women are always overwise—always contrary."

When matters were at this pass, the maid-servant came into the room, and announced that a little girl of shepherd Gawin's wanted to speak with the Minister. "Alas, I fear the young man will be at his rest!" said Isaac. Matilda grew pale, and looked exceedingly alarmed, and only said, "she hoped not." Isaac inquired of the maid, but she said the girl refused to tell her any thing, and said she had orders not to tell a word of aught that had happened about the house.

"Then something *has* happened," said Isaac. "It must be as I feared! Send the little girl ben."

Ellen came into the parlour with a beck as quick and as low as that made by the water ouzel, when standing on a stone in the middle of the water; and, without waiting for any inquiries, began her speech on the instant, with, "Sir—hem—heh—my father sent me, sir—hem—to tell ye that ye warn a to forget your promise to come ower the day, for that there's muckle need for yer helping hand yonder—sir; that's a', sir."

“ You may tell your father,” said Isaac, “ that I will come as soon as I am able. I will be there by twelve o’clock, God willing.”

“ Are you wise enough, my dear father, to send such a message ?” remonstrated Matilda. “ You are not able to go a journey to-day. I thought I had said enough about that before.—You may tell your father,” continued she, turning to Ellen, “ that my father cannot come the length of his house to-day.”

“ I’ll tell my father what the Minister bade me,” replied the girl. “ I’ll say, sir, that ye’ll be there by twall o’clock ;—will I, sir ?”

“ Yes, by twelve o’clock,” said Isaac.

Ellen had no sooner made her abrupt curtsey, and left the room, than Matilda, with the desperation of a general who sees himself on the point of being driven from a position which it had cost him much exertion to gain, again opened the fire of her eloquence upon her father. “ Were I you,” said she, “ I would scorn to enter their door, after the manner in which the profligate villain has behaved: first, to make an acquaintance with your grandson at the College—pervert all his ideas of rectitude and truth—then go home with him to his father’s house, during the vacation, and there live at heck and manger, no lady being in the house save your simple and unsuspecting Phemy, who now is reduced to the necessity of going to a shepherd’s cottage,

and begging to be admitted to the alliance of a family, the best of whom is far beneath her, to say nothing of the unhappy individual in question. Wo is me, that I have seen the day !”

“ If the picture be correctly drawn, it is indeed very bad ; but I hope the recent sufferings of the young man will have the effect of restoring him to the principles in which he was bred, and to a better sense of his heinous offences. I must go and see how the family fares, as in duty and promise bound. Content yourself, dear daughter. It may be that the unfortunate youth has already appeared at that bar from which there is no appeal.”

This consideration, as it again astounded, so it put to silence the offended dame, who suffered her father to depart on his mission of humanity without farther opposition ; and old Isaac again set out, meditating as he went, and often conversing with himself, on the sinfulness of man, and the great goodness of God. So deeply was he wrapt in contemplation, that he scarcely cast an eye over the wild mountain scenery by which he was surrounded, but plodded on his way, with eyes fixed on the ground, till he approached the cottage. He was there aroused from his reverie, by the bustle that appeared about the door. The scene was changed indeed from that to which he introduced himself two days before. The colliers came yelping and wagging their tails

to meet him, while the inmates of the dwelling were peeping out at the door, and as quickly vanishing again into the interior. There were also a pair or two of neighbouring shepherds sauntering about the side of the kail-yard dike, all dressed in their Sunday apparel, and every thing bespeaking some "occasion," as any uncommon occurrence is generally denominated.

"What can it be that is astir here to-day?" said Isaac to himself.—"Am I brought here to a funeral or corpse-chesting, without being apprised of the event? It must be so. What else can cause such a bustle about a house where trouble has so long prevailed? Ah! there is also old Robinson, my session-clerk and precentor. He is the true emblem of mortality: then it is indeed all over with the poor young man!"

Now Robinson had been at so many funerals all over the country, and was so punctual in his attendance on all within his reach, that to see him pass, with his staff, and black coat without the collar, was the very same thing as if a coffin had gone by. A burial was always a good excuse for giving the boys the play, for a refreshing walk into the country, and was, besides, a fit opportunity for moral contemplation, not to say any thing of hearing the country news. But there was also another motive, which some thought was the most powerful inducement of any with the old Dominie. It arose from that longing desire after pre-

eminence which reigns in every human breast, and which no man fails to improve, however small the circle may be in which it can be manifested. At every funeral, in the absence of the Minister, Robinson was called on to say grace; and when they were both present, whenever the Parson took up his station in one apartment, the Dominie took up his in another, and thus had an equal chance, for the time, with his superior. It was always shrewdly suspected, that the Clerk tried to outdo the Minister on such occasions, and certainly made up in length what he wanted in energy. The general remarks on this important point amounted to this, "that the Dominie was langer than the Minister, and though he was hardly just sae conceese, yet he meant as weel;" and that, "for the maist part, he was *stronger on the grave*." Suffice it, that the appearance of old Robinson, in the present case, confirmed Isaac in the belief of the solemnity of the scene awaiting him; and as his mind was humbled to acquiesce in the Divine will, his mild and reverend features were correspondent therewith. He thought of the disappointment and sufferings of the family, and had already begun in his heart to intercede for them at the throne of Mercy.

When he came near to the house, out came old Gawin himself. He had likewise his black coat on, and his Sunday bonnet, and a hand in each coat-pocket; but for all his misfortune and heavy trials, he strode

to the end of the house with a firm and undismayed step.—Ay, he is quite right, thought Isaac to himself; that man has his trust where it should be, fixed on the Rock of Ages; and he has this assurance, that the Power on whom he trusts can do nothing wrong. Such a man can look death in the face, undismayed, in all his steps and inroads.

Gawin spoke to some of his homely guests, then turned round, and came to meet Isaac, whom he saluted, by taking off his bonnet, and shaking him heartily by the hand.—The bond of restraint had now been removed from Gawin's lips, and his eye met the Minister's with the same frankness it was wont. The face of affairs was changed since they had last parted.

"How's a' w'ye the day, sir?—How's a' w'ye?—I'm unco blythe to see ye," said Gawin.

"Oh, quite well, thank you. How are you yourself? And how are all within?"

"As weel as can be expectit, sir—as weel as can be expectit."

"I am at a little loss, Gawin—Has any change taken place in family circumstances since I was here?"

"Oh, yes; there has indeed, sir; a material change—I hope for the better."

Gawin now led the way, without further words, into the house, desiring the Minister to follow him, and

“tak’ care o’ his head and the bauks, and no fa’ ower the bit stirk, for it was sure to be lying i’ the dark.”

When Isaac went in, there was no one there but the goodwife, neatly dressed in her black stuff gown, and check apron, with a close kerchief on her head, well crimped in the border, and tied round the crown and below the chin with a broad black ribbon. She also saluted the Minister with uncommon frankness—
“Come away, sir, come away. Dear, dear, how are ye the day? It’s but a slaitery kind o’ day this, as I was saying to my man, there; Dear, dear, Gawin, says I, I wish the Minister may be nae the waur o’ coming ower the muir the day. That was joost what I said. And dear, dear, sir, how’s Miss Matty, sir? Oh, it is lang sin’ I hae seen her. I like aye to see Miss Matty, ye ken, to get a rattle frae her about the folk, ye ken, and a’ our neighbours, that fa’ into sinfu’ gates; for there’s muckle sin gangs on i’ the parish. Ah, ay! I wat weel that’s very true, Miss Matty, says I. But what can folk help it? ye ken, folk are no a’ made o’ the same metal, as the airn tangs,—like you——”

—“Bless me with patience!” said Isaac in his heart; “this poor woman’s misfortunes have crazed her! What a salutation for the house of mourning!” Isaac looked to the bed, at the side of which he had so lately kneeled in devotion, and he looked with a reverent dread, but the corpse was not there! It was

neatly spread with a clean coverlid.—It is best to conceal the pale and ghostly features of mortality from the gazer's eye, thought Isaac. It is wisely done, for there is nothing to be seen in them but what is fitted for corruption.

"Gawin, can nae ye tak' the Minister ben the house, or the rest o' the clanjamphery come in?" said the talkative dame.—"Hout, ay, sir, step your ways ben the house. We hae a ben end and a but end the day, as weel as the best o' them. And ye're ane o' our ain folk, ye ken. Ah, ay! I wat weel that's very true! As I said to my man, Gawin, quo' I, whenever I see our Minister's face, I think I see the face of a friend."

"Gudewife, I hae but just ae word to say, by way o' remark," said Gawin; "folk wha count afore the change-keeper, hae often to count twice, and sae has the herd, wha counts his hogs afore Beltan.—Come this way, sir; follow me, and tak' care o' your head and the banks."

Isaac followed into the rustic parlour, where he was introduced to one he little expected to see sitting there. This was no other than the shepherd's son, who had so long been attended on as a dying person, and with whom Isaac had so lately prayed, in the most fervent devotion, as with one of whose life little hope was entertained. There he sat, with legs like two poles, hands like the hands of a skeleton; yet his emaciated

features were lighted up with a smile of serenity and joy. Isaac was petrified. He stood still on the spot, even though the young man rose up to receive him. He deemed he had come there to see his lifeless form laid in the coffin, and to speak words of comfort to the survivors. He was taken by surprise, and his heart thrilled with unexpected joy.

“ My dear young friend, do I indeed see you thus ?” he said, taking him kindly and gently by the hand. “ God has been merciful to you, above others of your race. I hope, in the mercy that has saved you from the gates of death, that you feel grateful for your deliverance ; for, trust me, it behoves you to do so, in no ordinary degree.”

“ I shall never be able to feel as I ought, either to my deliverer or to yourself,” said he. “ Till once I heard the words of truth and seriousness from your mouth, I have not dared, for these many years, to think my own thoughts, speak my own words, or perform the actions to which my soul inclined. I have been a truant from the school of truth ; but have now returned, with all humility, to my Master, for I feel that I have been like a wayward boy, groping in the dark, to find my way, though a path splendidly lighted up lay open for me. But of these things I long exceedingly to converse with you, at full length and full leisure. In the meantime, let me introduce you to

other friends who are longing for some little notice. This is my sister, sir ; and—shake hands with the Minister, Jane—And do you know this young lady, sir, with the mantle about her, who seems to expect a word from you, acknowledging old acquaintance ?”

“ My eyes are grown so dim now,” said old Isaac, “ that it is with difficulty I can distinguish young people from one another, unless they speak to me. But she will not look up. Is this my dear young friend, Miss Mary Sibbet ?”

“ Nay, sir, it is not she. But I think, as you two approach one another, your plaids appear very nearly the same.”

“ Phemy ! My own child Phemy ! Is it yourself ? Why did you not speak ?—But you have been an alien of late, and a stranger to me. Ah, Phemy ! Phemy ! I have been hearing bad news of you. But I did not believe them—no, I *would not* believe them.”

Euphemia for a while uttered not a word, but keeping fast hold of her grandfather’s hand, she drew it under her mantle, and crept imperceptibly a degree nearer to his breast. The old man waited for some reply, standing as in the act of listening ; till at length, in a trembling whisper, scarcely audible, she repeated these sacred words—“ Father, forgive me, for I knew not what I did !” The expression had the effect desired on Isaac’s mind. It brought to his remembrance that

gracious petition, the most fully fraught with mercy and forgiveness that ever was uttered on earth, and bowed his whole soul at once to follow the pattern of his great Master. His eye beamed with exultation in his Redeemer's goodness, and he answered, "Yes, my child, yes. He whose words you have unworthily taken, will not refuse the petition of any of his repentant children, however great their enormities may have been; and why should such a creature as I am presume to pretend indignation and offence, at aught farther than his high example warrants? May the Almighty forgive you as I do!"

"May Heaven bless and reward you!" said the young man. "But she is blameless—blameless as the babe on the knee. I alone am the guilty person, who infringed the rights of hospitality, and had nearly broken the bonds of confidence and love. But I am here to-day to make, or offer at least, what amends is in my power—to offer her my hand in wedlock; that whether I live or die, she may live without dishonour. But, reverend sir, all depends on your fiat. Without your approbation she will consent to nothing; saying, that she had offended deeply by taking her own will once, but naught should ever induce her to take it unadvisedly again. It was for this purpose that we sent for you so expressly to-day, namely, that I might entreat your consent to our union. I could not be removed from

home, so that we could not all meet, to know one another's mind, in any other place. We therefore await your approbation with earnest anxiety, as that on which our future happiness depends."

After some mild and impressive reprehensions, Isaac's consent was given in the most unqualified manner, and the names were given in to the old Dominie's hand, with proper vouchers, for the publication of the bans. The whole party dined together at old Gawin's. I was there among the rest, and thought to enjoy the party exceedingly ; but the party was too formal, and too much on the reserve before the Minister. I noted down, when I went home, all the conversation, as far as I could remember it, but it is not worth copying. I see that Gawin's remarks are all measured and pompous, and, moreover, delivered in a sort of bastard English, a language which I detest. He considered himself as now to be nearly connected with the *Manse Family*, and looking forward to an eldership in the church, deemed it incumbent on him to talk in a most sage and instructive manner. The young shepherd, and an associate of his, talked of dogs, Cheviot tups, and some remarkably bonny lasses that sat in the west gallery of the church. John Grierson of the Hope recited what they called "lang skelps o' metre," a sort of homely rhymes; that some of them pronounced to be "far ayont Burns's fit." And the goodwife ran bustling about ; but when-

ever she could get a little leisure, she gave her tongue free vent, without regard either to Minister or Dominie. She was too well trained in the old homely Scotch, to attempt any of the flights, which to Gawin, who was more sparing in his speech, were more easy to be accomplished. "Dear, dear, sirs, can nae ye eat away? Ye hae nae the stamacks o' as mony cats. Dear, dear, I'm sure an the flesh be nae good, it sude be good, for it never saw either braxy or breakwind, bleer-ee nor Beltan pock, but was the cantiest crock o' the Kaim-law. Dear, dear, Johnie Grierson, tak' another rive o't, and set a good example; as I said to my man there, Gawin, says I, it's weel kenn'd ye're nae flae-bitten about the gab; and I said very true too."

Many such rants did she indulge in, always reminding her guests that "it was a names-gieing-in, whilk was, o' a' ither things, the ane neist to a wedding," and often hinting at their new and honourable alliance, scarcely even able to keep down the way in which it was brought about; for she once went so far as to say, "As I said to my gudeman, Gawin, says I, for a' the fy-gae-to ye hae made, it's weel kenn'd faint heart never wan fair lady. Ay, weel I wat, that's very true, says I; a bird in the hand is worth twa on the bush.—Won a' to and fill yoursells, sirs; there's routh o' mair where that came frae. It's no aye the fattest foddering that mak's the fu'est aumry—and that's nae lee."

Miss Matilda, the Minister's maiden daughter, was in towering indignation about the marriage, and the connexion with a shepherd's family; and it was rumoured over all the parish that she would never countenance her niece any more. How matters went at first it is perhaps as well for Miss Matilda's reputation, in point of good-nature, that I am not able to say; but the last time I was at the Manse, the once profligate and freethinking student had become Helper to old Isaac, and was beloved and revered by all the parish, for the warmth of his devotion, and soundness of his principles. His amiable wife Euphemia had two sons, and their aunt Matty was nursing them with a fondness and love beyond that which she bore to life itself.

In conclusion, I have only further to remark, that I have always considered the prayers of that good old man as having been peculiarly instrumental in saving a wretched victim, not only from immediate death, but from despair of endless duration.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SCHOOL OF MISFORTUNE.

THE various ways in which misfortunes affect different minds, are often so opposite, that in contemplating them, we may well be led to suppose the human soul animated and directed in some persons by corporeal functions, formed after a different manner from those of others—persons of the same family frequently differing most widely in this respect.

It will appear, on a philosophic scrutiny of human feelings, that the extremes of laughing and crying are more nearly allied than is sometimes believed. With children, the one frequently dwindles, or breaks out into the other. I once happened to sit beside a negro, in the pit of the Edinburgh theatre, while the tragedy of Douglas was performing. As the dialogue between Old Norval and Lady Randolph proceeded, he grew more and more attentive; his eyes grew very large, and seemed set immovably in one direction; the tears started from them; his features went gradually awry; his un-

der-lip curled and turned to one side ; and just when I expected that he was going to cry outright, he burst into the most violent fit of laughter.

I have a female friend, on whom unfortunate accidents have the singular effect of causing violent laughter, which, with her, is much better proportioned to the calamity, than crying is with many others of the sex. I have seen the losing of a rubber at whist, when there was every probability that her party would gain it, cause her to laugh till her eyes streamed with tears. The breaking of a tureen, or set of valuable china, would quite convulse her. Danger always makes her sing, and misfortunes laugh. If we hear her in any apartment of the farm-house, or the offices, singing very loud, and very quick, we are sure something is on the point of going wrong with her ; but if we hear her burst out a-laughing, we know that it is past redemption. Her memory is extremely defective ; indeed she scarcely seems to retain any perfect recollection of past events ; but her manners are gentle, easy, and engaging ; her temper good, and her humour inexhaustible ; and, with all her singularities, she certainly enjoys a greater share of happiness than her chequered fortune could possibly have bestowed on a mind differently constituted.

I have another near relation, who, besides being possessed of an extensive knowledge in literature, and a

refined taste, is endowed with every qualification requisite to constitute the valuable friend, the tender parent, and the indulgent husband ; yet his feelings, and his powers of conception, are so constructed, as to render him a constant prey to corroding care. No man can remain many days in his company without saying, in his heart, " that man was made to be unhappy." What others view as slight misfortunes, affect him deeply ; and in the event of any such happening to himself, or those that are dear to him, he will groan from his inmost soul, perhaps for a whole evening after it first comes to his knowledge, and occasionally, for many days afterwards, as the idea recurs to him. Indeed, he never wants something to make him miserable ; for, on being made acquainted with any favourable turn of fortune, the only mark of joy that it produces is an involuntary motion of the one hand to scratch the other elbow ; and his fancy almost instantaneously presents to him such a number of difficulties, dangers, and bad consequences attending it, that though I have often hoped to awake him to joy by my tidings, I always left him more miserable than I found him.

I have another acquaintance whom we denominate " the Knight," who falls upon a method totally different to overcome misfortunes. In the event of any cross accident, or vexatious circumstance, happening to him, he makes straight towards his easy chair—sits

calmly down upon it—clenches his right hand, with the exception of his fore-finger, which is suffered to continue straight—strikes his fist violently against his left shoulder—keeps it in that position, with his eyes fixed on one particular point, till he has cursed the event and all connected with it most heartily,—then, with a countenance of perfect good-humour, he indulges in a pleasant laugh, and if it is possible to draw a comical or ridiculous inference from the whole, or any part of the affair, he is sure to do it, that the laugh may be kept up. If he fails in effecting this, he again resumes his former posture, and consigns all connected with the vexatious circumstance to the devil ; then takes another good hearty laugh ; and in a few minutes the affair is no more heard or thought of.

John Leggat is a lad about fifteen, a character of great singularity, whom nature seems to have formed in one of her whims. He is not an entire idiot, for he can perform many offices about his master's house—herd the cows, and run errands too, provided there be no dead horses on the road, nor any thing extremely ugly ; for, if there be, the time of his return is very uncertain. Among other anomalies in his character, the way that misfortunes affect him is not the least striking. He once became warmly attached to a young hound, which was likewise very fond of him, paying him all the grateful respect so often exhibited by that faithful

animal. John loved him above all earthly things—some even thought that he loved him better than his own flesh and blood. The hound one day came to an untimely end. John never got such sport in his life; he was convulsed with laughter when he contemplated the features of his dead friend. When about his ordinary business, he was extremely melancholy; but whenever he came and looked at the carcass, he was transported with delight, and expressed it by the most extravagant raptures. He next attached himself to a turkey-cock, which he trained to come at his call, and pursue and attack such people as he pointed out for that purpose. John was very fond of this amusement; but it proved fatal to his favourite—an irritated passenger knocked it dead at a stroke. This proved another source of unbounded merriment to John; the stiff half-spread wing, the one leg stretched forward, and the other back, were infinitely amusing; but the abrupt crook in his neck—his turned-up eye and open bill were quite irresistible—John laughed at them till he was quite exhausted. Few ever loved their friends better than John did while they were alive; no man was ever so much delighted with them after they were dead.

The most judicious way of encountering misfortunes of every kind, is to take up a firm resolution never to shrink from them when they cannot be avoided, nor

yet be tamely overcome by them, or add to our anguish by useless repining, but, by a steady and cheerful perseverance, endeavour to make the best of whatever untoward event occurs. To do so, still remains in our power; and it is a grievous loss indeed, with regard to fortune or favour, that perseverance will not, sooner or later, overcome. I do not recommend a stupid insensible apathy with regard to the affairs of life, nor yet that listless inactive resignation which persuades a man to put his hands in his bosom, and saying, It is the will of Heaven, sink under embarrassments without a struggle. The contempt which is his due will infallibly overtake such a man, and poverty and wretchedness will press hard upon his declining years.

I had an old and valued friend in the country, who, on any cross accident happening that vexed his associates, made always the following observations: "There are just two kinds of misfortunes, gentlemen, at which it is folly either to be grieved or angry; and these are, things that can be remedied, and things that cannot be remedied." He then proved, by plain demonstration, that the case under consideration belonged to one or other of these classes, and showed how vain and unprofitable it was to be grieved or angry at it. This maxim of my friend's may be rather too comprehensive; but it is nevertheless a good one; for a resolution to that effect cannot fail of leading a man to the

proper mode of action. It indeed comprehends all things whatsoever, and is as much as to say, that a man should never suffer himself to grow angry at all; and, upon the whole, I think, if the matter be candidly weighed, it will appear, that the man who suffers himself to be transported with anger, or teased by regret, is commonly, if not always, the principal sufferer by it, either immediately, or in future. Rage is unlicensed, and runs without a curb. It lessens a man's respectability among his contemporaries; grieves and hurts the feelings of those connected with him; harrows his own soul; and transforms a rational and accountable creature into the image of a fiend.

Impatience under misfortunes is certainly one of the failings of our nature, which contributes more than any other to imbitter the cup of life, and has been the immediate cause of more acts of desperate depravity than any passion of the human soul. The loss of fortune or favour is particularly apt to give birth to this tormenting sensation; for, as neither the one nor the other occurs frequently without some imprudence or neglect of our own having been the primary cause, so the reflection on that always furnishes the gloomy retrospect with its principal sting.

So much is this the case that I hold it to be a position almost incontrovertible, that out of every twenty worldly misfortunes, nineteen occur in consequence of

our own imprudence. Many will tell you, it was owing to such and such a friend's imprudence that they sustained all their losses. No such thing. Whose imprudence or want of foresight was it that trusted such a friend, and put it in his power to ruin them, and reduce the families that depended on them for support, from a state of affluence to one of penury and bitter regret? If the above position is admitted, then there is, as I have already remarked, but one right and proper way in which misfortunes ought to affect us; namely, by stirring us up to greater circumspection and perseverance. Perseverance is a noble and inestimable virtue! There is scarcely any difficulty or danger that it will not surmount. Whoever observes a man bearing up under worldly misfortunes, with undaunted resolution, will rarely fail to see that man ultimately successful. And it may be depended on, that circumspection in business is a quality so absolutely necessary, that without it the success of any one will only be temporary.

The present Laird of J—s—y, better known by the appellation of Old Sandy Singlebeard, was once a common hired shepherd, but he became master of the virtues above recommended, for he had picked them up in the severe school of misfortune. I have heard him relate the circumstances myself, oftener than once. "My father had bought me a stock of sheep,"

said he, "and fitted me out as a shepherd; and from the profits of these, I had plenty of money to spend, and lay out on good clothes; so that I was accounted a thriving lad, and rather a dashing blade among the lasses. Chancing to change my master at a term, I sold my sheep to the man who came in my place, and bought those of the shepherd that went from the flock to which I was engaged. But when the day of payment came, the man who bought my sheep could not pay them, and without that money, I had not wherewith to pay mine own. He put me off from week to week, until the matter grew quite distressing; for, as the price of shepherds' stock goes straight onward from one hand to another, probably twenty, or perhaps forty people, were all kept out of their right by this backwardness of my debtor. I craved him for the money every two or three days, grumbled, and threatened a prosecution, till at last my own stock was pounded. Thinking I should be disgraced beyond recovery, I exerted what little credit I had, and borrowed as much as relieved my stock; and then, being a good deal exasperated, resorted immediately to legal measures, as they are called, in order to recover the debt due to me, the non-payment of which had alone occasioned my own difficulties. Notwithstanding every exertion, however, I could never draw a farthing from my debtor, and only got deeper and deeper into

expenses to no purpose. Many a day it kept me bare and busy before I could clear my feet, and make myself as free and independent as I was before. This was the beginning of my misfortunes, but it was but the beginning; year after year I lost and lost, until my little all was as good as three times sold off at the ground; and at last I was so reduced, that I could not say the clothes I wore were my own.

“ This will never do, thought I; they shall crack well that persuaded me to sell at random again.—Accordingly, I thenceforth took good care of all my sales that came to any amount. My rule was, to sell my little things, such as wool, lambs, and fat sheep, worth the money; and not to part with them till I got the price in my hand. This plan I never rued; and people finding how the case stood, I had always plenty of merchants; so that I would recommend it to every man who depends for procuring the means of living on business such as mine. What does it signify to sell your stock at a great price, merely for a boast, if you never get the money for it? It will be long ere that make any one rich or independent! This did all very well, but still I found, on looking over my accounts at the end of the year, that there were a great many items in which I was regularly taken in. My shoemaker charged me half-a-crown more for every pair of shoes than I could have bought them for in a market for

ready money; the smith, threepence more for shoeing them. My haberdasher's and tailor's accounts were scandalous. In shirts, stockings, knives, razors, and even in shirt-neck buttons, I found myself taken in to a certain amount. But I was never so astonished, as to find out, by the plain rules of addition and subtraction, assisted now and then by the best of all practical rules—(I mean the one that says, 'if such a thing will bring such a thing, what will such and such a number bring?')—to find, I say, that the losses and profits in small things actually come to more at the long-run, than any casual great slump loss, or profit, that usually chances to a man in the course of business. Wo to the man who is not aware of this! He is labouring for that which will not profit him. By a course of strict economy, I at length not only succeeded in clearing off the debt I had incurred, but saved as much money as stocked the farm of Windlestrae-knowe. That proved a fair bargain; so, when the lease was out, I took Dodydamms in with it; and now I am, as you see me, the Laird of J—s—y, and farmer of both these besides. My success has been wholly owing to this:—misfortune made me cautious—caution taught me a lesson which is not obvious to every one, namely *the mighty importance of the two right-hand columns in addition*. The two left-hand ones, those of pounds and shillings, every one knows the value of. With a man of any com-

mon abilities, those will take care of themselves ; but he that neglects the pence and farthings is a goose :"—

Any one who reads this will set down old Singlebeard as a miser ; but I scarcely know a man less deserving the character. If one is present to hear him settling an account with another, he cannot help thinking him niggardly, owing to his extraordinary avidity in small matters ; but there is no man whom customers like better to deal with, owing to his high honour and punctuality. He will not pocket a farthing that is the right of any man living, and he is always on the watch lest some designing fellow overreach him in these minute particulars. For all this, he has assisted many of his poor relations with money and credit, when he thought them deserving it, or judged that it could be of any benefit to them ; but always with the strictest injunctions of secrecy, and an assurance, that, if ever they hinted the transaction to any one, they forfeited all chance of farther assistance from him. The consequence of this has always been, that while he was doing a great deal of good to others by his credit, he was railing against the system of giving credit all the while ; so that those who knew him not, took him for a selfish, contracted, churlish old rascal.

He was once applied to in behalf of a nephew, who had some fair prospects of setting up in business. He thought the stake too high, and declined it ; for it was

a rule with him, never to credit any one so far as to put it in his power to distress him, or drive him into any embarrassment. A few months afterwards, he consented to become bound for one half of the sum required, and the other half was made up by some less wealthy relations in conjunction. The bonds at last became due, and I chanced to be present on a visit to my old friend Singlebeard, when the young man came to request his uncle's quota of the money required. I knew nothing of the matter, but I could not help noticing the change in old Sandy's look, the moment that his nephew made his appearance. I suppose he thought him too foppish to be entirely dependent on the credit of others, and perhaps judged his success in business, on that account, rather doubtful. At all events, the old Laird had a certain quizzical, dissatisfied look, that I never observed before ; and all his remarks were in conformity with it. In addressing the young man, too, he used a degree of familiarity which might be warranted by his seniority and relationship, and the circumstances in which his nephew stood to him as an obliged party ; but it was intended to be as provoking as possible, and obviously did not fail to excite a good deal of uneasy feeling.

“ That's surely a very fine horse of yours, Jock ?” said the Laird.—“ Hech, man, but he is a sleek ane !

How much corn does he eat in a year, this hunter of yours, Jock ?”

“ Not much, sir, not much. He is a very fine horse that, uncle. Look at his shoulder ; and see what limbs he has ; and what a pastern !—How much do you suppose such a horse would be worth, now, uncle ?”

“ Why, Jock, I cannot help thinking he is something like Geordy Dean’s daughter-in-law,—nought but a spindle-shankit devil ! I would not wonder if he had cost you eighteen pounds, that greyhound of a creature ?”

“ What a prime judge you are ! Why, uncle, that horse cost eighty-five guineas last autumn. He is a real blood horse that ; and has won a great deal of valuable plate.”

“ Oh ! that, indeed, alters the case ! And have you got all that valuable plate ?”

“ Nay, nay ; it was before he came to my hand.”

“ That was rather a pity now, Jock—I cannot help thinking that was a great pity ; because if you had got the plate, you would have had something you could have called your own.—So, you don’t know how much corn that fellow eats in a year ?”

“ Indeed I do not ; he never gets above three feeds in a day, unless when he is on a journey, and then he takes five or six.”

“ Then take an average of four : four feeds are worth two shillings at least, as corn is selling. There is fourteen shillings a-week : fourteen times fifty-two—why, Jock, there is L.36, 8s. for horse's corn ; and there will be about half as much, or more, for hay, besides : on the whole, I find he will cost you about L.50 a-year at livery.—I suppose there is an absolute necessity that a manufacturer should keep such a horse ?”

“ O ! God bless you, sir, to be sure. We must gather in money and orders, you know. And then, consider the ease and convenience of travelling on such a creature as that, compared with one of your vile low-bred hacks ; one goes through the country as he were flying, on that animal.”

Old Sandy paddled away from the stable, towards the house, chuckling and laughing to himself ; but again turned round, before he got half-way.—“ Right, Jock ! quite right. Nothing like gathering in plenty of money and orders. But, Jock, hark ye—I do not think there is any necessity for *flying* when one is on such a commission. You should go leisurely and slowly through the towns and villages, keeping all your eyes about you, and using every honest art to obtain good customers. How can you do this, Jock, if you go as you were flying through the country ? People, instead of giving you a good order, will come to

their shop-door, and say—There goes the Flying Manufacturer!—Jock, they say a rolling stone never gathers any moss. How do you think a flying one should gather it?”.

The dialogue went on in the same half-humorous, half-jeering tone all the forenoon, as well as during dinner, while a great number of queries still continued to be put to the young man ; as—How much his lodgings cost him a-year ? The answer to this astounded old Sandy. His comprehension could hardly take it in ; he opened his eyes wide, and held up his hands, exclaiming, with a great burst of breath, “ What enormous profits there must be in your business !” and then the Laird proceeded with his provoking interrogatories—How much did his nephew’s fine boots and spurs cost ? what was his tailor’s bill yearly ? and every thing in the same manner ; as if the young gentleman had come from a foreign country, of which Sandy Singlebeard wished to note down every particular. The nephew was a little in the fidgets, but knowing the ground on which he stood, he answered all his uncle’s queries but too truly, impressing on his frugal mind a far greater idea of his own expenditure than was necessary, and which my old friend could not help viewing as utterly extravagant.

Immediately on the removal of the cloth, the young gentleman withdrew into another room, and sending

for his uncle to speak with him, he there explained the nature of his errand, and how absolutely necessary it was for him to have the money, for the relief of his bond. Old Sandy was off in a twinkling. He had no money for him—not one copper!—not the value of a hair of his thin grey beard should he have from him! He had other uses for his money, and had won it too hardly to give it to any one to throw away for him on grand rooms and carpets, upon flying horses, and four-guinea boots!

They returned to the parlour, and we drank some whisky toddy together. There was no more gibing and snappishness. The old man was civil and attentive, but the face of the young one exhibited marks of anger and despair. He took his leave, and went away abruptly enough; and I began to break some jests on the Flying Manufacturer, in order to try the humour of my entertainer. I soon found it out; old Single-beard's shaft was shot, and he now let me know he had a different opinion of his nephew from what had been intimated by the whole course of his conversation with the young man himself. He said he was a good lad; an ingenious and honest one; that he scarcely knew a better of his years; but he wanted to curb a little that *upsetting spirit* in him, to which every young man new to business was too much addicted.

The young gentleman went to his other friends in

a sad pickle, and represented himself to them as ruined beyond all redress; reprobating all the while the inconsistency of his uncle, and his unaccountable and ill-timed penury.

The most part of the young gentleman's relations were in deep dismay, in consequence of the Laird's refusal to perform his engagement. But one of them, after listening seriously to the narration, instead of being vexed, only laughed immoderately at the whole affair, and said he had never heard any thing so comic and truly ludicrous. "Go your ways home, and mind your business," said he; "you do not know any thing of old uncle Sandy: leave the whole matter to me, and I shall answer for his share of the concern."

"You will be answerable at your own cost, then," said the nephew. "If the money is not paid till he advance it, the sum will never be paid on this side of time.—You may as well try to extract it from the rock on the side of the mountain."

"Go your ways," said the other. "It is evident that you can do nothing in the business; but were the sum three times the amount of what it is, I shall be answerable for it."

It turned out precisely as this gentleman predicted; but no man will conceive old Sandy's motive for refusing that which he was in fact bound to perform: He could not bear to have it known that he had done so

liberal and generous an action, and wished to manage matters so, that his nephew might believe the money to have been raised in some other way attended with the utmost difficulty. He could not put his nephew to the same school in which he himself had been taught, namely, the School of Actual Adversity ; but he wanted to give him a touch of Ideal Misfortune ; that he might learn the value of independence.

CHAPTER V.

GEORGE DOBSON'S EXPEDITION TO HELL.

THERE is no phenomenon in nature less understood, and about which greater nonsense is written, than dreaming. It is a strange thing. For my part, I do not understand it, nor have I any desire to do so ; and I firmly believe that no philosopher that ever wrote knows a particle more about it than I do, however elaborate and subtle the theories he may advance concerning it. He knows not even what sleep is, nor can he define its nature, so as to enable any common mind to comprehend him ; and how, then, can he define that ethereal part of it, wherein the soul holds intercourse with the external world ?—how, in that state of abstraction, some ideas force themselves upon us, in spite of all our efforts to get rid of them ; while others, which we have resolved to bear about with us by night as well as by day, refuse us their fellowship, even at periods when we most require their aid ?

No, no ; the philosopher knows nothing about either ;

and if he says he does, I entreat you not to believe him. He does not know what mind is ; even his own mind, to which one would think he has the most direct access : far less can he estimate the operations and powers of that of any other intelligent being. He does not even know, with all his subtlety, whether it be a power distinct from his body, or essentially the same, and only incidentally and temporarily endowed with different qualities. He sets himself to discover at what period of his existence the union was established. He is baffled ; for Consciousness refuses the intelligence, declaring, that she cannot carry him far enough back to ascertain it. He tries to discover the precise moment when it is dissolved, but on this Consciousness is altogether silent ; and all is darkness and mystery ; for the origin, the manner of continuance, and the time and mode of breaking up of the union between soul and body, are in reality undiscoverable by our natural faculties—are not patent, beyond the possibility of mistake : but whosoever can read his Bible, and solve a dream, can do either, without being subjected to any material error.

It is on this ground that I like to contemplate, not the theory of dreams, but the dreams themselves ; because they prove to the unlettered man, in a very forcible manner, a distinct existence of the soul, and its lively and rapid intelligence with external nature, as

well as with a world of spirits with which it has no acquaintance, when the body is lying dormant, and the same to the soul as if sleeping in death.

I account nothing of any dream that relates to the actions of the day; the person is not sound asleep who dreams about these things; there is no division between matter and mind, but they are mingled together in a sort of chaos—what a farmer would call compost—fermenting and disturbing one another. I find that in all dreams of that kind, men of every profession have dreams peculiar to their own occupations; and, in the country, at least, their import is generally understood. Every man's body is a barometer. A thing made up of the elements must be affected by their various changes and convulsions; and so the body assuredly is. When I was a shepherd, and all the comforts of my life depended so much on good or bad weather, the first thing I did every morning was strictly to overhaul the dreams of the night; and I found that I could calculate better from them than from the appearance and changes of the sky. I know a keen sportsman, who pretends that his dreams never deceive him. If he dream of angling, or pursuing salmon in deep waters, he is sure of rain; but if fishing on dry ground, or in waters so low that the fish cannot get from him, it forebodes drought; hunting or shooting hares, is snow, and moorfowl, wind, &c. But the most

extraordinary professional dream on record is, without all doubt, that well-known one of George Dobson, coach-driver in Edinburgh, which I shall here relate ; for though it did not happen in the shepherd's cot, it has often been recited there.

George was part proprietor and driver of a hackney-coach in Edinburgh, when such vehicles were scarce ; and one day a gentleman, whom he knew, came to him and said :—" George, you must drive me and my son here out to ——," a certain place that he named, somewhere in the vicinity of Edinburgh.

" Sir," said George, " I never heard tell of such a place, and I cannot drive you to it unless you give me very particular directions."

" It is false," returned the gentleman ; " there is no man in Scotland who knows the road to that place better than you do. You have never driven on any other road all your life ; and I insist on your taking us."

" Very well, sir," said George, " I'll drive you to hell, if you have a mind ; only you are to direct me on the road."

" Mount and drive on, then," said the other ; " and no fear of the road."

George did so, and never in his life did he see his horses go at such a noble rate ; they snorted, they pranced, and they flew on ; and as the whole road appeared to lie down-hill, he deemed that he should soon

come to his journey's end. Still he drove on at the same rate, far, far down-hill,—and so fine an open road he never travelled,—till by degrees it grew so dark that he could not see to drive any farther. He called to the gentleman, inquiring what he should do; who answered, that this was the place they were bound to, so he might draw up, dismiss them, and return. He did so, alighted from the dickie, wondered at his foaming horses, and forthwith opened the coach-door, held the rim of his hat with the one hand, and with the other demanded his fare.

“You have driven us in fine style, George,” said the elder gentleman, “and deserve to be remembered; but it is needless for us to settle just now, as you must meet us here again to-morrow precisely at twelve o'clock.”

“Very well, sir,” said George; “there is likewise an old account, you know, and some toll-money;” which indeed there was.

“It shall be all settled to-morrow, George, and moreover, I fear there will be some toll-money to-day.”

“I perceived no tolls to-day, your honour,” said George.

“But I perceived one, and not very far back neither, which I suspect you will have difficulty in repassing without a regular ticket. What a pity I have no change on me!”

"I never saw it otherwise with your honour," said George, jocularly; "what a pity it is you should always suffer yourself to run short of change!"

"I will give you that which is as good, George," said the gentleman; and he gave him a ticket written with red ink, which the honest coachman could not read. He, however, put it into his sleeve, and inquired of his employer where that same toll was which he had not observed, and how it was that they did not ask toll from him as he came through? The gentleman replied, by informing George that there was no road out of that domain, and that whoever entered it must either remain in it, or return by the same path; so they never asked any toll till the person's return, when they were at times highly capricious; but that the ticket he had given him would answer his turn. And he then asked George if he did not perceive a gate, with a number of men in black standing about it.

"Oho! Is yon the spot?" says George; "then, I assure your honour, yon is no toll-gate, but a private entrance into a great man's mansion; for do not I know two or three of the persons yonder to be gentlemen of the law, whom I have driven often and often? and as good fellows they are, too, as any I know—men who never let themselves run short of change! Good day.—Twelve o'clock to-morrow?"

"Yes, twelve o'clock noon, precisely;" and with

that, George's employer vanished in the gloom, and left him to wind his way out of that dreary labyrinth the best way he could. He found it no easy matter, for his lamps were not lighted, and he could not see an ell before him—he could not even perceive his horses' ears; and what was worse, there was a rushing sound, like that of a town on fire, all around him, that stunned his senses, so that he could not tell whether his horses were moving or standing still. George was in the greatest distress imaginable, and was glad when he perceived the gate before him, with his two identical friends, men of the law, still standing. George drove boldly up, accosted them by their names, and asked what they were doing there; they made him no answer, but pointed to the gate and the keeper. George was terrified to look at this latter personage, who now came up and seized his horses by the reins, refusing to let him pass. In order to introduce himself, in some degree, to this austere toll-man, George asked him, in a jocular manner, how he came to employ his two eminent friends as assistant gate-keepers?

"Because they are among the last comers," replied the ruffian, churlishly. "You will be an assistant here, to-morrow."

"The devil I will, sir?"

"Yes, the devil you will, sir."

"I'll be d—d if I do then—that I will."

"Yes, you'll be d—d if you do—that you will."

"Let my horses go in the meantime, then, sir, that I may proceed on my journey."

"Nay."

"Nay?—Dare you say nay to me, sir? My name is George Dobson, of the Pleasance, Edinburgh, coach-driver, and coach-proprietor too; and no man shall say *nay* to me, as long as I can pay my way. I have his Majesty's license, and I'll go and come as I choose—and that I will. Let go my horses there, and tell me what is your demand."

"Well, then, I'll let your horses go," said the keeper; "but I'll keep yourself for a pledge." And with that he let go the horses, and seized honest George by the throat, who struggled in vain to disengage himself, and swore, and threatened, according to his own confession, most bloodily. His horses flew off like the wind, so swift, that the coach seemed flying in the air, and scarcely bounding on the earth once in a quarter of a mile. George was in furious wrath, for he saw that his grand coach and harness would all be broken to pieces, and his gallant pair of horses maimed or destroyed; and how was his family's bread now to be won!—He struggled, threatened, and prayed in vain;—the intolerable toll-man was deaf to all remonstrances. He once more appealed to his two genteel acquaintances of the law, reminding them how he had

of late driven them to Roslin on a Sunday, along with two ladies, who, he supposed, were their sisters, from their familiarity, when not another coachman in town would engage with them. But the gentlemen, very ungenerously, only shook their heads, and pointed to the gate. George's circumstances now became desperate, and again he asked the hideous toll-man what right he had to detain him, and what were his charges.

"What right have I to detain you, sir, say you? Who are you that make such a demand here? Do you know where you are, sir?"

"No, faith, I do not," returned George; "I wish I did. But I *shall* know, and make you repent your insolence too. My name, I told you, is George Dobson, licensed coach-hirer in Pleasance, Edinburgh; and to get full redress of you for this unlawful interruption, I only desire to know where I am."

"Then, sir, if it can give you so much satisfaction to know where you are," said the keeper, with a malicious grin, "you *shall* know, and you may take instruments by the hands of your two friends there, instituting a legal prosecution. Your redress, you may be assured, will be most ample, when I inform you that you are in HELL! and out at this gate you pass no more."

This was rather a damper to George, and he began to perceive that nothing would be gained in such a place by the strong hand, so he addressed the inexorable toll-

man, whom he now dreaded more than ever, in the following terms: "But I must go home at all events, you know, sir, to unyoke my two horses, and put them up, and to inform Chirsty Halliday, my wife, of my engagement. And, bless me! I never recollected till this moment, that I am engaged to be back here to-morrow at twelve o'clock, and see, here is a free ticket for my passage this way."

The keeper took the ticket with one hand, but still held George with the other. "Oho! were you in with our honourable friend, Mr R—— of L——y?" said he. "He has been on our books for a long while;—however, this will do, only you must put your name to it likewise; and the engagement is this—You, by this instrument, engage your soul, that you will return here by to-morrow at noon."

"Catch me there, billy!" says George. "I'll engage no such thing, depend on it;—that I will not."

"Then remain where you are," said the keeper, "for there is no other alternative. We like best for people to come here in their own way,—in the way of their business;" and with that he flung George backward, heels-over-head down hill, and closed the gate.

George, finding all remonstrance vain, and being desirous once more to see the open day, and breathe the fresh air, and likewise to see Chirsty Halliday, his wife, and set his house and stable in some order, came up

again, and in utter desperation, signed the bond, and was suffered to depart. He then bounded away on the track of his horses, with more than ordinary swiftness, in hopes to overtake them; and always now and then uttered a loud Wo! in hopes they might hear and obey, though he could not come in sight of them. But George's grief was but beginning; for at a well-known and dangerous spot, where there was a tan-yard on the one hand, and a quarry on the other, he came to his gallant steeds overturned, the coach smashed to pieces, Dawtie with two of her legs broken, and Duncan dead. This was more than the worthy coachman could bear, and many degrees worse than being in hell. There, his pride and manly spirit bore him up against the worst of treatment; but here, his heart entirely failed him, and he laid himself down, with his face on his two hands, and wept bitterly, bewailing, in the most deplorable terms, his two gallant horses, Dawtie and Duncan.

While lying in this inconsolable state, some one took hold of his shoulder, and shook it; and a well-known voice said to him, "Geordie! what is the matter wi' ye, Geordie?" George was provoked beyond measure at the insolence of the question, for he knew the voice to be that of Chirsty Halliday, his wife. "I think you needna ask that, seeing what you see," said George. "O, my poor Dawtie, where are a' your jinkings and prancings now, your moopings and your win-

tings? I'll ne'er be a proud man again—bereaved o' my bonny pair!"

"Get up, George; get up, and bestir yourself," said Chirsty Halliday, his wife. "You are wanted directly, to bring in the Lord President to the Parliament House. It is a great storm, and he must be there by nine o'clock.—Get up—rouse yourself, and make ready—his servant is waiting for you."

"Woman, you are demented!" cried George. "How can I go and bring in the Lord President, when my coach is broken in pieces, my poor Dawtie lying with twa of her legs broken, and Duncan dead? And, moreover, I have a previous engagement, for I am obliged to be in hell before twelve o'clock."

Chirsty Halliday now laughed outright, and continued long in a fit of laughter; but George never moved his head from the pillow, but lay and groaned,—for, in fact, he was all this while lying snug in his bed; while the tempest without was roaring with great violence, and which circumstance may perhaps account for the rushing and deafening sound which astounded him so much in hell. But so deeply was he impressed with the idea of the reality of his dream, that he would do nothing but lie and moan, persisting and believing in the truth of all he had seen. His wife now went and informed her neighbours of her husband's plight, and of his singular engagement with Mr R——.

of L——y at twelve o'clock. She persuaded one friend to harness the horses, and go for the Lord President; but all the rest laughed immoderately at poor coachy's predicament. It was, however, no laughing to him; he never raised his head, and his wife becoming at last uneasy about the frenzied state of his mind, made him repeat every circumstance of his adventure to her, (for he would never believe or admit that it was a dream,) which he did in the terms above narrated; and she perceived, or dreaded, that he was becoming somewhat feverish. She went out, and told Dr Wood of her husband's malady, and of his solemn engagement to be in hell at twelve o'clock.

"He maunna keep it, dearie. He maunna keep that engagement at no rate," said Dr Wood. "Set back the clock an hour or twa, to drive him past the time, and I'll ca' in the course of my rounds. Are ye sure he hasna been drinking hard?"—She assured him he had not.—"Weel, weel, ye maun tell him that he maunna keep that engagement at no rate. Set back the clock, and I'll come and see him. It is a frenzy that maunna be trifled with. Ye maunna laugh at it, dearie,—maunna laugh at it. Maybe a nervish fever, wha kens."

The Doctor and Chirsty left the house together, and as their road lay the same way for a space, she fell a-telling him of the two young lawyers whom

George saw standing at the gate of hell, and whom the porter had described as two of the last comers. When the Doctor heard this, he stayed his hurried, stooping pace in one moment, turned full round on the woman, and fixing his eyes on her, that gleamed with a deep, unstable lustre, he said, "What's that ye were saying, dearie? What's that ye were saying? Repeat it again to me, every word." She did so. On which the Doctor held up his hands, as if palsied with astonishment, and uttered some fervent ejaculations. "I'll go with you straight," said he, "before I visit another patient. This is wonderfu'! it is terrible! The young gentlemen are both at rest—both lying corpses at this time! Fine young men—I attended them both—died of the same exterminating disease—Oh, this is wonderful; this is wonderful!"

The Doctor kept Chirsty half running all the way down the High Street and St Mary's Wynd, at such a pace did he walk, never lifting his eyes from the pavement, but always exclaiming now and then, "It is wonderfu'! most wonderfu'!" At length, prompted by woman's natural curiosity, Chirsty inquired at the Doctor if he knew any thing of their friend Mr R——of L——y. But he shook his head, and replied, "Na, na, dearie,—ken naething about him. He and his son are baith in London,—ken naething about him; but the tither is awfu'—it is perfectly awfu'!"

When Dr Wood reached his patient, he found him very low, but only a little feverish; so he made all haste to wash his head with vinegar and cold water, and then he covered the crown with a treacle plaster, and made the same application to the soles of his feet, awaiting the issue. George revived a little, when the Doctor tried to cheer him up by joking him about his dream; but on mention of that he groaned, and shook his head. "So you are convinced, dearie, that it is nae dream?" said the Doctor.

"Dear sir, how could it be a dream?" said the patient. "I was there in person, with Mr R—— and his son; and see, here are the marks of the porter's fingers on my throat."—Dr Wood looked, and distinctly saw two or three red spots on one side of his throat, which confounded him not a little.—"I assure you, sir," continued George, "it was no dream, which I know to my sad experience. I have lost my coach and horses, —and what more have I?—signed the bond with my own hand, and in person entered into the most solemn and terrible engagement."

"But ye're no to keep it, I tell ye," said Dr Wood; "ye're no to keep it at no rate. It is a sin to enter into a compact wi' the deil, but it is a far greater ane to keep it. Sae let Mr R—— and his son bide where they are yonder, for ye sanna stir a foot to bring them out the day."

“ Oh, oh, Doctor !” groaned the poor fellow, “ this is not a thing to be made a jest o’ ! I feel that it is an engagement that I cannot break. Go I must, and that very shortly. Yes, yes, go I must, and go I will, although I should borrow David Barclay’s pair.” With that he turned his face towards the wall, groaned deeply, and fell into a lethargy, while Dr Wood caused them to let him alone, thinking if he would sleep out the appointed time, which was at hand, he would be safe ; but all the time he kept feeling his pulse, and by degrees showed symptoms of uneasiness. His wife ran for a clergyman of famed abilities, to pray and converse with her husband, in hopes by that means to bring him to his senses ; but after his arrival, George never spoke more, save calling to his horses, as if encouraging them to run with great speed ; and thus in imagination driving at full career to keep his appointment, he went off in a paroxysm, after a terrible struggle, precisely within a few minutes of twelve o’clock.

A circumstance not known at the time of George’s death made this singular professional dream the more remarkable and unique in all its parts. It was a terrible storm on the night of the dream, as has been already mentioned, and during the time of the hurricane,

London smack went down off Wearmouth about three in the morning. Among the sufferers were the Hon. Mr R—— of L——y, and his son ! George could

not know aught of this at break of day, for it was not known in Scotland till the day of his interment; and as little knew he of the deaths of the two young lawyers, who both died of the small-pox the evening before.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SOUTERS OF SELKIRK.

I HAVE heard an amusing story of a young man whose name happened to be the same as that of the hero of the preceding chapter—George Dobson. He was a shoemaker, a very honest man, who lived at the foot of an old street, called the Back Row, in the town of Selkirk. He was upwards of thirty, unmarried, had an industrious old stepmother, who kept house for him, and of course George was what is called “a bein bachelor,” or “a chap that was gayan weel to leeve.” He was a cheerful happy fellow, and quite sober, except when on the town-council, when he sometimes took a glass with the magistrates of his native old borough, of whose loyalty, valour, and antiquity, there was no man more proud.

Well, one day, as George was sitting in his *shop*, as he called it, (though no man now-a-days would call that a shop in which there was nothing to sell,) sewing away at boots and shoes for his customers, whom he

could not half hold in whole leather, so great was the demand over all the country for George Dobson's boots and shoes—he was sitting, I say, plying away, and singing with great glee,—

“ Up wi' the Souters o' Selkirk,
And down wi' the Earl o' Hume,
And up wi' a' the brave billies
That sew the single-soled shoon !
And up wi' the yellow, the yellow ;
The yellow and green hae doon weel ;
Then up wi' the lads of the Forest,
But down wi' the Merse to the deil !”

The last words were hardly out of George's mouth, when he heard a great noise enter the Back Row, and among the voices one making loud proclamation, as follows :—

“ Ho yes !—Ho yes !
Souters ane, Souters a',
Souters o' the Back Row,
There's a gentleman a-coming
Wha will ca' ye Souters a'.”

“ I wish he durst,” said George. “ That will be the Earl o' Hume wha's coming. He has had us at ill-will for several generations. Bring my aik staff in to the shop, callant, and set it down beside me here—and ye may bring ane to yoursell too.—I say, callant, stop. Bring my grandfather's auld sword wi' ye. I wad like to see the Earl o' Hume, or ony o' his cronies, come and cast up our honest calling and occupation till us !”

George laid his oak staff on the cutting-board before him, and leaned the old two-edged sword against the wall, at his right hand. The noise of the proclamation went out at the head of the Back Row, and died in the distance; and then George began again, and sung the Souters of Selkirk with more obstreperous glee than ever.—The last words were not out of his mouth, when a grand gentleman stepped into the shop, clothed in light armour, with a sword by his side and pistols in his breast. He had a livery-man behind him, and both the master and man were all shining in gold.—This is the Earl o' Hame in good earnest, thought George to himself; but, nevertheless, he shall not danton me.

“Good morrow to you, Souter Dobson,” said the gentleman. “What song is that you were singing?”

George would have resented the first address with a vengeance, but the latter question took him off it unawares, and he only answered, “It is a very good sang, sir, and ane of the auldest—What objections have you to it?”

“Nay, but what is it about?” returned the stranger; “I want to hear what you say it is about.”

“I'll sing you it over again, sir,” said George, “and then you may judge for yoursell. Our sangs up here-awa dinna speak in riddles and parables; they're gayan downright;” and with that George gave it him over again full birr, keeping at the same time a sharp look-

out on all his guest's movements; for he had no doubt now that it was to come to an engagement between them, but he was determined not to yield an inch, for the honour of old Selkirk.

When the song was done, however, the gentleman commended it, saying, it was a spirited old thing, and, without doubt, related to some of the early Border feuds. "But how think you the Earl of Hume would like to hear this?" added he. George, who had no doubt all this while that the Earl of Hume was speaking to him, said good-naturedly, "We dinna care muckle, sir, whether the Earl o' Hume take the sang ill or weel. I'se warrant he has heard it mony a time ere now, and, if he were here, he wad hear it every day when the school looses, and Wattie Henderson wad gie him it every night."

"Well, well, Souther Dobson, that is neither here nor there. That is not what I called about. Let us to business. You must make me a pair of boots in your very best style," said the gentleman, standing up, and stretching forth his leg to be measured.

"I'll make you no boots, sir," said George, nettled at being again called Souther. "I have as many regular customers to supply as hold me busy from one year's end to the other. I cannot make your boots—you may get them made where you please."

"*You shall make them*, Mr Dobson," said the stranger;

"I am determined to try a pair of boots of your making, cost what they will. Make your own price, but let me have the boots by all means; and, moreover, I want them before to-morrow morning."

This was so conciliatory and so friendly of the Earl, that George, being a good-natured fellow, made no farther objection, but took his measure, and promised to have them ready. "I will pay them now," said the gentleman, taking out a purse of gold; but George refused to accept of the price till the boots were produced. "Nay, but I will pay them now," said the gentleman; "for, in the first place, it will ensure me of the boots, and, in the next place, I may probably leave town to-night, and make my servant wait for them. What is the cost?"

"If they are to be as good as I can make them, sir, they will be twelve shillings."

"Twelve shillings, Mr Dobson! I paid thirty-six for these I wear in London, and I expect yours will be a great deal better. Here are two guineas, and be sure to make them good."

"I cannot, for my life, make them worth the half of that money," said George. "We have no materials in Selkirk that will amount to one-third of it in value." However, the gentleman flung down the gold, and went away, singing the Souters of Selkirk.

"He is a most noble fellow that Earl of Hume,"

said George to his apprentice. "I thought he and I should have had a battle, but we have parted on the best possible terms."

"I wonder how you could bide to be *Souter'd* yon gate!" said the boy.

George scratched his head with the awl, bit his lip, and looked at his grandfather's sword. He had a great desire to follow the insolent gentleman; for he found that he had inadvertently suffered a great insult without resenting it.

After George had shaped the boots with the utmost care, and of the best and finest Kendal leather, he went up the Back Row to seek assistance, so that he might have them ready at the stated time; but never a stitch of assistance could George obtain, for the gentleman had trysted a pair of boots in every shop in the Row, paid for them all, and called every one of the shoemakers Souter twice over.

Never was there such a day in the Back Row of Selkirk! What could it mean? Had the gentleman a whole regiment coming up, all of the same size, and the same measure of leg? Or was he not rather an army agent, come to take specimens of the best workmen in the country? This last being the prevailing belief, every Selkirk Souter threw off his coat, and fell a-slashing and cutting of Kendal leather; and such a

forenoon of cutting, and sewing, and puffing, and resetting, never was in Selkirk since the battle of Flodden-field.

George's shop was the nethermost of the street, so that the stranger guests came all to him first ; so, scarcely had he taken a hurried dinner, and begun to sew again, and, of course, to sing, when in came a fat gentleman, exceedingly well mounted with sword and pistols ; he had fair curled hair, red cheeks that hung over his stock, and a liveryman behind him. " Merry be your heart, Mr Dobson ! but what a plague of a song is that you are singing ? " said he. George looked very suspicious-like at him, and thought to himself, Now I could bet any man two gold guineas that this is the Duke of Northumberland, another enemy to our town ; but I'll not be cowed by him neither, only I could have wished I had been singing another song when his Grace came into the shop.—These were the thoughts that ran through George's mind in a moment, and at length he made answer—" We reckon it a good sang, my lord, and ane o' the auldest."

" Would it suit your convenience to sing that last verse over again ? " said the fat gentleman ; and at the same time he laid hold of his gold-handled pistols.

" O certainly, sir," said George ; " but at the same time I must take a lesson in manners from my superiors ; " and with that he seized his grandfather's cut-

and-thrust sword, and cocking that up by his ear, he sang out with fearless glee—

“The English are dolts, to a man, a man—
Fat puddings to fry in a pan, a pan—
Their Percys and Howards
We reckon but cowards—
But turn the Blue Bannets wha can, wha can!”

George now set his joints in such a manner, that the moment the Duke of Northumberland presented his pistol, he might be ready to cleave him, or cut off his right hand, with his grandfather's cut-and-thrust sword; but the fat gentleman durst not venture the issue—he took his hand from his pistol, and laughed till his big sides shook. “You are a great original, Dobson,” said he; “but you are nevertheless a brave fellow—a noble fellow—a Souter among a thousand, and I am glad I have met with you in this mood too. Well, then, let us proceed to business. You must make me a pair of boots in your very best style, George, and that without any loss of time.”

“O Lord, sir, I would do that with the greatest pleasure, but it is a thing entirely out of my power,” said George, with a serious face.

“Pooh, pooh! I know the whole story,” said the fat gentleman. “You are all hoaxed and made fools of this morning; but the thing concerns me very much, and I'll give you five guineas, Mr Dobson, if you will

make me a pair of good boots before to-morrow at this time."

"I wad do it cheerfully for the fifth part o' the price, my lord," said George; "but it is needless to speak about that, it being out o' my power. But what way are we hoaxed? I dinna account ony man made a fool of wha has the cash in his pocket as weel as the goods in his hand."

"You are all made fools of together, and I am the most made a fool of, of any," said the fat gentleman. "I betted a hundred guineas with a young Scottish nobleman last night, that he durst not go up the Back Row of Selkirk, calling all the way,

'Souters ane, Souters a',
Souters o' the Back Raw;'

and yet, to my astonishment, you have let him do so, and insult you all with impunity; and he has won."

"Confound the rascal!" exclaimed George. "If we had but taken him up! But we took him for our friend, come to warn us, and lay all in wait for the audacious fellow who was to come up behind."

"And a good amends you took of him when he came!" said the fat gentleman. "Well, after I had taken the above bet, up speaks another of our company, and he says—'Why make such account of a few poor cobblers, or Souters, or how do you call them? I'll bet a hundred guineas, that I'll go up the Back Row

after that gentleman has set them all agog, and I'll call every one of them *Souter* twice to his face.' I took the bet in a moment: 'You dare not, for your blood, sir,' says I. 'You do not know the spirit and bravery of the men of Selkirk. They will knock you down at once, if not tear you to pieces.' But I trusted too much to your spirit, and have lost my two hundred guineas, it would appear. Tell me, in truth, Mr Dobson, did you suffer him to call you *Souter* twice to your face without resenting it?"

George bit his lip, scratched his head with the awl, and gave the linges such a jerk, that he made them both crack in two. "D—n it! we're a' affrontit thegither!" said he, in a half whisper, while the apprentice-boy was like to burst with laughter at his master's mortification.

"Well, I have lost my money," continued the gentleman; "but I assure you, George, the gentleman wants no boots. He has accomplished his purpose, and has the money in his pocket; but as it will avail me, I may not say how much, I entreat that you will make me a pair. Here is the money,—here are five guineas, which I leave in pledge; only let me have the boots. Or suppose you make these a little wider, and transfer them to me; that is very excellent leather, and will do exceedingly well; I think I never saw better;" and he stood leaning over George, handling

the leather. "Now, do you consent to let me have them?"

"I can never do that, my lord," says George, "having the other gentleman's money in my pocket. If you should offer me ten guineas, it would be the same thing."

"Very well, I will find those who will," said he, and off he went, singing,

"Turn the Blue Bonnets wha can, wha can."

"This is the queerest day about Selkirk that I ever saw," said George; "but really this Duke of Northumberland, to be the old hereditary enemy of our town, is a real fine, frank fellow."

"Ay, but he *Souter'd* ye, too," said the boy.

"It's a lee, ye little blackguard."

"I heard him ca' you a Souter amang a thousand, master; and that taunt will be heard tell o' yet."

"I fancy, callant, we maun let that flee stick to the wa'," said George; and sewed away, and sewed away, and got the boots finished next day at twelve o'clock. Now, thought he to himself, I have thirty shillings by this bargain, and so I'll treat our magistrates to a hearty glass this afternoon; I hae muckle need o' a slockening, and the Selkirk bailies never fail a friend.—George put his hand into his pocket to clink his two gold guineas; but never a guinea was in George's pocket,

nor plack either ! His countenance changed, and fell so much, that the apprentice noticed it, and suspected the cause ; but George would confess nothing, though, in his own mind, he strongly suspected the Duke of Northumberland of the theft, *alias*, the fat gentleman with the fair curled hair, and the red cheeks hanging over his stock.

George went away up among his brethren of the awl in the Back Row, and called on them every one ; but he soon perceived, from their blank looks, and their disinclination to drink that night, that they were all in the same predicament with himself. The fat gentleman with the curled hair had visited every one of them, and got measure for a pair of ten-guinea boots, but had not paid any of them ; and, somehow or other, every man had lost the price of the boots which he had received in the morning. Whom to blame for this, nobody knew ; for the whole day over, and a good part of the night, from the time the proclamation was made, the Back Row of Selkirk was like a cried fair ; all the idle people in the town and the country about were there, wondering after the man who had raised such a demand for boots. After all, the Souters of Selkirk were left neither richer nor poorer than they were at the beginning, but every one of them had been four times called a *Souter* to his face,—a title of great obloquy in that town, although the one of all others that the townsmen ought

to be proud of. And it is curious that they are proud of it when used collectively ; but apply it to any of them as a term of reproach, and you had better call him the worst name under heaven.

This was the truth of the story ; and the feat was performed by the late Duke of Queensberry, when Earl of March, and two English noblemen then on a tour through this country. Every one of them gained his bet, through the simplicity of the honest Souters ; but certainly the last had a difficult part to play, having staked two hundred guineas that he would take all the money from the Souters that they had received from the gentleman in the morning, and call every one of them *Souter* to his face. He got the price entire from every one, save Thomas Inglis, who had drunk the half of his before he got to him ; but this being proved, the English gentleman won.

George Dobson took the thing most amiss. He had been the first taken in all along, and he thought a good deal about it. He was, moreover, a very honest man, and in order to make up the boots to the full value of the money he had received, he had shod them with silver, which took two Spanish dollars, and he had likewise put four silver tassels to the tops, so that they were splendid boots, and likely to remain on his hand. In short, though he did not care about the loss, he took the hoax very sore to heart.

Shortly after this, he was sitting in his shop, working away, and not singing a word, when in comes a fat gentleman, with fair curled hair, and red cheeks, but they were *not* hanging over his cravat; and he says, "Good morning, Dobson. You are very quiet and contemplative this morning."

"Ay, sir; folk canna be aye alike merry."

"Have you any stomach for taking measure of a pair of boots this morning?"

"Nah! I'll take measure o' nae mae boots to strangers; I'll stick by my auld customers."—He is very like my late customer, thought George, but his tongue is not the same. If I thought it were he, I would nick him!

"I have heard the story of the boots, George," said the visitor, "and never heard a better one. I have laughed very heartily at it; and I called principally to inform you, that if you will call at Widow Wilson's, in Hawick, you will get the price of your boots."

"Thank you, sir," said George; and the gentleman went away; Dobson being now persuaded he was *not* the Duke of Northumberland, though astonishingly like him. George had not sewed a single yerking, ere the gentleman came again into the shop, and said, "You had better measure me for these boots, Dobson. I intend to be your customer in future."

"Thank you, sir, but I would rather not, just now."

“ Very well ; call then at Widow Wilson’s, in Hawick, and you shall get *double* payment for the boots you have made.”—George thanked him again, and away he went ; but in a very short space he entered the shop again, and again requested George to measure him for a pair of boots. George became suspicious of the gentleman, and rather uneasy, as he continued to haunt him like a ghost ; and so, merely to be quit of him, he took the measure of his leg and foot. “ It is very near the measure of these fine silver-mounted ones, sir,” said George ; “ you had better just take them.”

“ Well, so be it,” said the stranger. “ Call at Widow Wilson’s, in Hawick, and you shall have *triple* payment for your boots. Good day.”

“ O, this gentleman is undoubtedly wrong in his mind,” said George to himself. “ This beats all the customers I ever met with ! Ha—ha—ha ! Come to Widow Wilson’s, and you shall have payment for your boots,—double payment for your boots,—*triple* payment for your boots ! Oh ! the man’s as mad as a March hare ! He—he—he—he !”

“ Hilloa, George,” cried a voice close at his ear, “ what’s the matter wi’ ye ? Are ye gane daft ? Are ye no gaun to rise to your wark the day ?”

“ Aich ! Gudeness guide us, mother, am I no up yet ?” cried George, springing out of his bed ; for he had been all the while in a sound sleep, and dreaming.

"What gart ye let me lie aae lang? I thought I had been i' the shop!"

"Shop!" exclaimed she; "I dare say, then, you thought you had found a fiddle in't. What were ye guffawing and laughing at?"

"O! I was laughing at a fat man, and the payment of a pair o' boots at Widow Wilson's, in Hawick."

"Widow Wilson's, i' Hawick!" exclaimed his mother, holding up both her hands; "Gude forgie me for a great leear, if I hae dreamed about any body else, frae the tae end o' the night to the tither!"

"Hout, mother, hand your tongue; it is needless to heed your dreams, for ye never gie ower dreaming about somebody."

"And what for no, lad? Hae an auld body as good a right to dream as a young aye? Mrs Wilson's a throughgaun quene, and clears mair than a hundred a-year by the Tannage. I ae warrant there aall some-thing follow thir dreams; I got the maist o' my dreams redd."

George was greatly tickled with his dream about the fat gentleman and the boots, and so well convinced was he that there was some sort of meaning in it, that he resolved to go to Hawick the next market day, and call on Mrs Wilson, and settle with her; although it was a week or two before his usual term of payment, he

thought the money would scarcely come wrong. So that day he plied and wrought as usual ; but instead of his favourite ditties relating to the Forest, he chanted, the whole day over, one as old as any of them ; but I am sorry I recollect only the chorus and a few odd stanzas of it.

ROUND ABOUT HAWICK.

We'll round about Hawick, Hawick,
Round about Hawick thegither ;
We'll round about Hawick, Hawick,
And in by the bride's gudemither.
Sing, Round about Hawick, &c.

And as we gang by we will rap,
And drink to the luck o' the bigging ;
For the bride has her tap in her lap,
And the bridegroom his tail in his rigging.
Sing, Round about Hawick, &c.

There's been little luck i' the deed ;
We're a' in the dumps thegither ;
Let's gie the bridegroom a sheep's head,
But gie the bride brose and butter.
Sing, Round about Hawick, &c.

Then a' the gudewives i' the land
Came flocking in droves thegither,
A' bringing their bountith in hand,
To please the young bride's gudemither.
Sing, Round about Hawick, &c.

The black gudewife o' the Braes
Gae baby-clouts no worth a button ;

But the auld gadewife o' Pouchrie
 Cam in wi' a shouder o' mutton.
 Sing, Round about Hawick. &c.

Wee Jean o' the Coate gae a pun'.
 A penny, a pluck, and a boddie;
 But the wife at the head o' the town
 Gae nought but a lang pin-toe.*
 Sing, Round about Hawick, &c.

The mistress o' Bortagh cam ben,
 Aye blinking me coonty and canny;
 But some said she had in her han'
 A kipple o' bottles o' branny.
 Sing, Round about Hawick. &c.

And some brought dumplings o' wee,
 And some brought fitches o' bacon.
 And kebbucks and cruppecks an' a;
 But Jenny Muirhead brought a capon.
 Sing, Round about Hawick. &c.

Then up cam the wife o' the MILL
 Wi' the cog, and the meal, and the water;
 For she likit the joke an' weel
 To gie the bride brose and butter.
 Sing, Round about Hawick. &c.

And first she put in a bit bread,
 And then she put in a bit butter,
 And then she put in a sheep's head,
 Horns and a' thegither.
 Sing, Round about Hawick, Hawick,
 Round about Hawick thegither;
 Round about Hawick, Hawick,
 Round about Hawick for ever

* A pin-cushion.

On the Thursday following, George, instead of going to *the shop*, dressed himself in his best Sunday clothes, and, with rather a curious face, went ben to his stepmother, and inquired "what feck o' siller she had about her?"

"Siller! Gudeness forgie you, Geordie, for an even-down waster and a profligate! What are ye gaun to do wi' siller the day?"

"I have something ado ower at Hawick, and I was thinking it wad be as weel to pay her account when I was there."

"Oho, lad! are ye there wi' your dreams and your visions o' the night, Geordie? Ye're aye keen o' sangs, man; I can pit a vera gude ane i' your head. There's an unco gude auld thing they ca', Wap at the widow, my laddie. D'ye ken it, Geordie? Siller! quo he! Hae ye ony feck o' siller, mother! Whew! I hae as muckle as will pay the widow's account sax times ower! Ye may tell her that frae me. Siller! lack-a-day!—But, Geordie, my man—Auld wives' dreams are no to be regardit, ye ken. Eh?"

After putting half a dozen pairs of trysted shoes, and the identical silver-mounted boots, into the cadger's creels—then the only regular carriers—off set George Dobson to Hawick market, a distance of nearly eleven new-fashioned miles, but then accounted only eight and three quarters; and after parading the Sand-

bed, Slitterick Bridge, and the Tower Knowe, for the space of an hour, and shaking hands with some four or five acquaintances, he ventured east-the-gate to pay Mrs Wilson her account. He was kindly welcomed, as every good and regular customer was, by Mrs Wilson. They settled amicably, and in the course of business George ventured several sly, jocular hints, to see how they would be taken, vexed that his grand and singular dream should go for nothing. No, nothing would pass there but sterling cents per cent. The lady was deaf and blind to every effort of gallantry, valuing her own abilities too highly ever to set a man a second time at the head of her flourishing business. Nevertheless, she could not be blind to George's qualifications—he knew that was impossible,—for in the first place he was a goodly person, with handsome limbs and broad square shoulders; of a very dark complexion, true, but with fine, shrewd, manly features; was a Burgess and councillor of the town of Selkirk, and as independent in circumstances as she was.

Very well; Mrs Wilson knew all this—valued George Dobson accordingly, and would not have denied him any of those good points more than Gideon Scott would to a favourite Cheviot tup, in any society whatever; but she had such a sharp, cold, business manner, that George could discover no symptoms where the price of the boots was to come from. In

order to conciliate matters as far as convenient, if not even to stretch a point, he gave her a farther order, larger than the one just settled ; but all that he elicited was thanks for his custom, and one very small glass of brandy ; so he drank her health, and a good husband to her. Mrs Wilson only courtseyed, and thanked him coldly, and away George set west-the-street, with a quick and stately step, saying to himself that the expedition of the silver-mounted boots was all up.

As he was posting up the street, an acquaintance of his, a flesher, likewise of the name of Wilson, eyed him, and called him aside. “ Hey, George, come this way a bit. How are ye ? How d’ye do, sir ? What news about Selkirk ? Grand demand for boots there just now, I hear—eh ? Needing any thing in my way the day ?—Nae beef like that about your town. Come away in, and taste the gudewife’s bottle. I want to hae a crack wi’ ye, and get measure of a pair o’ boots. The grandest story yon, sir, I ever heard—eh ?—Needing a leg o’ beef ?—Better ? Never mind, come away in.”

George was following Mr Wilson into the house, having as yet scarcely got a word said,—and he liked the man exceedingly,—when one pulled his coat, and a pretty servant girl smirked in his face and said, “ Mais-ter Dabsen, thou maun cum awa yest-the-gate and

speak till Mistress Wulain ; there's suntheyng forgot stween ye. Thou maun cum directly."

"Haste ye, gae away. rin !" says Wilson, pushing him out at the door, "that's a better bait than a poor fleshier's dram. There's some comings and gangings yonder. A bica birth and a thrifty dame. Grip an grip to, lad ! I'ae take her at a hauder pund the quarter. Let us see you as ye come back again."

George went back, and there was Mrs Wilson standing in the door to receive him.

"I quite forgot, Mr Dobson—I beg pardon. But I hope, as usual, you will take a family-dinner with me to-day?"

"Indeed, Mrs Wilson, I was just thinking to mysell that you were fey, and that we two would never bargain again, for I never paid you an account before that I did not get the offer of my dinner."

"A very stupid neglect ! But, indeed, I have so many things to mind, and so hard set with the world, Mr Dobson ; you cannot conceive, when there's only a woman at the head of affairs——"

"Ay, but sic a woman," said George, and shook his head.

"Well, well, come at two. I dine early. No ceremony, you know. Just a homely dinner, and no drinking." So saying, she turned and sailed into the house very gracefully ; and then turning aside, she looked out

at the window after him, apostrophizing him thus—
“Ay, ye may strut away west-the-street, as if I were looking after you. Shame in the souter-like face o’ ye; I wish you had been fifty miles off the day! If it hadna been fear for affronting a good steady customer, you shouldna hae been here. For there’s my brother coming to dinner, and maybe some o’ his cronies; and he’ll be see ta’en wi’ this merry souter chield, that I ken weel they’ll drink mair than twice the profits o’ this bit order. My brother maun hae a’ his ain will too! Folk maun aye bow to the bush they get bield frae, else I should take a stoup out o’ their punch cogs the night.”

George attended at ten minutes past two, to be as fashionable as the risk of losing his kale would permit—gave a sharp wooer-like rap at the door, and was shown by the dimpling Border maid into *The Room*,—which, in those days, meant the only sitting apartment of a house. Mrs Wilson being absent to superintend the preparations for dinner, and no one to introduce the parties to each other, think of George’s utter amazement, when he saw the identical fat gentleman, who came to him thrice in his dream, and ordered him to come to Widow Wilson’s and get payment of his boots! He was the very gentleman in every respect, every inch of him, and George could have known him among a thousand. It was not the Duke of Northum-

berland, but he that was so very like him, with fair curled hair, and red cheeks, which did not hang over his cravat. George felt as if he had been dropped into another state of existence, and hardly knew what to think or say. He had at first very nigh run up and taken the gentleman's hand, and addressed him as an old acquaintance, but luckily he recollected the equivocal circumstances in which they met, which was not actually in *the shop*, but in George's little bed-closet in the night, or early in the morning.

In short, the two sat awkward enough, till, at last, Mrs Wilson entered, in most brilliant attire, and really a handsome fine woman ; and with her a country lady, with something in her face extremely engaging. Mrs Wilson immediately introduced the parties to each other thus :—" Brother, this is Mr Dobson, boot and shoemaker in Selkirk ;—as honest a young man, and as good a payer, as I know.—Mr Dobson, this is Mr Turnbull, my brother, the best friend I ever had ; and this is his daughter Margaret."

The parties were acquainted in one minute, for Mr Turnbull was a frank kind-hearted gentleman ; ay, they were more than acquainted, for the very second or third look that George got of Margaret Turnbull, he loved her. And during the whole afternoon, every word that she spoke, every smile that she smiled, and every happy look that she turned on another, added to

his flame ; so that long ere the sun leaned his elbow on Skelshill Pen, he was deeper in love than, perhaps, any other souter in this world ever was. It is needless to describe Miss Turnbull ; she was just what a woman should be, and not exceeding twenty-five years of age. What a mense she would be to the town of Selkirk, and to a boot and shoemaker's parlour, as well as to the top of the councillors' seat every Sunday !

When the dinner was over, the brandy bottle went round, accompanied with the wee wee glass, in shape of the burr of a Scots Thistle. When it came to Mr Turnbull, he held it up between him and the light,—“ Keatie, whaten a niff-naff of a glass is this ? let us see a feasible ane.”

“ If it be over little, you can fill it the oftener, brother. I think a big dram is so vulgar !”

“ That's no the thing, Keatie. The truth is, that ye're a perfect she Nabal, and ilka thing that takes the value of a plack out o' your pocket, is vulgar, or improper, or something that way. But I'll tell you, Keatie, my woman, what you shall do : Set down a black bottle on this hand o' me, and twa clear anes on this, and the cheeny bowl atween them, and I'll let you see what I'll do. I ken o' nane within the ports o' Hawick can afford a bowl better than you. Nane o' your half bottles and quarter bottles at a time ; now Keatie, ye ken, ye has a confoundit trick o' that ; but

I hae some hopes that I'll learn ye good manners by and by."

"Dear brother, I'm sure you are not going to drink your bottles here? Think what the town would say, if I were to keep cabals o' drinkers in my sober house."

"Do as I bid you now, Kestie, and lippen the rest to me.—Ah, she is a niggard, Mr Dobson, and has muckle need of a little schooling to open her heart."

The materials were produced, and Mr Turnbull, as had been predicted, did not spare them. Other two Wilsons joined them immediately after dinner, the one a shoemaker, and the other our friend the flesher, and a merrier afternoon has seldom been in Hawick. Mr Turnbull was perfectly delighted with George:—he made him sing "The Souters o' Selkirk," — "Turn the Blue Bonnets," and all his best things; but when he came to "Round about Hawick," he made him sing it six times over, and was never weary of laughing at it, and identifying the characters with those then living. Then the story of the boots was an inexhaustible joke, and the likeness between Mr Turnbull and the Duke of Northumberland an acceptable item. At length Mr Turnbull got so elevated, that he said, "Ay, man! and they are shod wi' silver, and silver tassels round the top? I wad gie a bottle o' wine for a sight o' them."

"It shall cost you nae mair," said George, and in three minutes he set them on the table. Mr Turnbull

tried them on, and walked through and through the room with them, singing—

“ With silver he was shod before—
With burning gold behind.”

They fitted exactly ; and before sitting down, he offered George the original price, and got them.

It became late rather too soon for our group, but the young lady grew impatient to get home, and Mr Turnbull was obliged to prepare for going ; nothing, however, would please him, save that George should go with him all night ; and George being, long before this time, over head and ears in love, accepted of the invitation, and the loan of the flesher's bay mare, and went with them. Miss Margaret had soon, by some kind of natural inspiration, discovered our jovial Souter's partiality for her ; and in order to open the way for a banter, (the best mode of beginning a courtship,) she fell on and rallied him most severely about the boots and the *Soutering*, and particularly about letting himself be robbed of the two guineas. This gave George an opportunity of retaliating so happily, that he wondered at himself, for he acknowledged that he said things that he never believed he could have had the face to say to a lady before.

The year after that, the two were married in the house of Mrs Wilson, and Mr Turnbull paid down a hundred pounds to George on the day he brought her

from that house a bride. Now, thought George to himself, I have been twice most liberally paid for my boots in that house. My wife, perhaps, will stand for the third payment, which I hope will be the best of all; but I still think there is to be another one beside.—He was not wrong, for after the death of his worthy father-in-law, he found himself entitled to the third of his whole effects; the transfer of which, nine years after his marriage, was made over to him in the house of his friend, Mrs Wilson.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAIRD OF CASSWAY.

THERE is an old story which I have often heard related, about a great Laird of Cassway, in an outer corner of Dumfries-shire, of the name of Beattie, and his two sons. The incidents of the story are of a very extraordinary nature. This Beattie had occasion to be almost constantly in England, because, as my informant said, he took a great hand in government affairs, from which I conclude that the tradition had its rise about the time of the Civil Wars ; for about the close of that time, the Scotts took the advantage of the times to put the Beatties down, who, for some previous ages, had maintained the superiority of that district.

Be that as it may, the Laird of Cassway's second son, Francis, fell desperately in love with a remarkably beautiful girl, the eldest daughter of Henry Scott of Drumfielding, a gentleman, but still only a retainer, and far beneath Beattie of Cassway, both in point of

wealth and influence. Francis was a scholar newly returned from the University—was tall, handsome, of a pale complexion, and gentlemanly appearance. While Thomas, the eldest son, was fair, ruddy, and sun-browned, a perfect picture of health and good-humour—a sportsman, a warrior, and a jovial blade: one who would not suffer a fox to get rest in the whole moor district. He rode the best horse, kept the best hounds, played the best fiddle, danced the best country bumpkin, and took the stoutest draught of mountain dew of any man between Erick Brae and Terist Sane, and was altogether that sort of a young man, that whenever he cast his eyes on a pretty girl, either at chapel or weapon-shaw, she would hide her face, and giggle as if tickled by some unseen hand.

Now, though Thomas, or the Young Laird, as he was called, had only spoke once to Ellen Scott in his life, at which time he chucked her below the chin, and bid the devil take him if ever he saw as bonny a face in his whole born days; yet, for all that, Ellen loved him. It could not be said that she was *in love* with him, for a maiden's heart must be won before it is given absolutely away; but hers gave him the preference to any other young man. She loved to see him, to hear of him, and to laugh at him; and it was even observed by the domestics, that Tam Beattie o' the Cassway's

name came oftener into her conversation than there was any good reason for."

Such was the state of affairs when Francis came home, and fell desperately in love with Ellen Scott; and his father being in England, and he under no restraint, he went frequently to visit her. She received him with a kindness and affability that pleased him to the heart; but he little wist that this was only a spontaneous and natural glow of kindness towards him because of his connexions, and rather because he was the Young Laird of Cassway's only brother, than the poor but accomplished Francis Beattie, the scholar from Oxford.

He was, however, so much delighted with her, that he asked her father's permission to pay his addresses to her. Her father, who was a prudent and sensible man, answered him in this wise—"That nothing would give him greater delight than to see his beloved Ellen joined with so accomplished and amiable a young gentleman in the bonds of holy wedlock, provided his father's assent was previously obtained. But as he himself was subordinate to another house, not on the best terms with the house of Cassway, he would not take it on him to sanction any such connexion without the Old Laird's full consent. That, moreover, as he, Francis Beattie, was just setting out in life, as a lawyer, there was but too much reason to doubt that a matri-

menial connexion with Ellen at that time would be highly imprudent; therefore it was not to be thought further of till the Old Laird was consulted. In the meantime, he should always be welcome to his house, and to his daughter's company, as he had the same dependence on his honour and integrity, as if he had been a son of his own."

The young man thanked him affectionately, and could not help acquiescing in the truth of his remarks, promised not to mention matrimony farther, till he had consulted his father, and added—"But indeed you must excuse me, if I avail myself of your permission to visit here often, as I am sensible that it will be impossible for me to live for any space of time out of my dear Ellen's sight." He was again assured of welcome, and the two parted mutually pleased.

Henry Scott of Drumfielding was a widower, with six daughters, over whom presided Mrs Jane Jordan, their maternal aunt, an old maid, with fashions and ideas even more antiquated than herself. No sooner had the young wooer taken his leave, than she bounced into the room, the only sitting apartment in the house, and said, in a loud important whisper, "What's that young swankey of a lawyer wanting, that he's aye hankering sae muckle about our town? I'll tell you what, brother Harry, it strikes me that he wants to make a wheelwright o' your daughter Nell. Now, gin

he aces your consent to any sicca thing, dinna ye grant it. That's a'. Take an auld fool's advice gin ye wad prosper. Folk are a' wise ahint the hand, and nae will ye be."

"Dear, Mrs Jane, what objections can you have to Mr Francis Beattie, the most accomplished young gentleman of the whole country?"

"'Complished gentleman! 'Complished kira-milk! I'll tell you what, brother Harry,—sfore I were a handless lady, I wad rather be a tailor's layboard. What has he to maintain a lady spouse with? The wind o' his lungs, forsooth!—thinks to sell that for goad in goupings. Hech me! Crazy wad they be wha wad buy it; and they wha trust to crazy people for their living will live but crazily. Take an auld fool's advice gin ye wad prosper, else ye'll be wise ahint the hand. Have nae mair to do with him—Nell's bread for his better; tell him that. Or, by my certy, gin I meet wi' him face to face, I'll tell him."

"It would be unfriendly in me to keep aught a secret from you, sister, considering the interest you have taken in my family. I *have* given him my consent to visit my daughter, but at the same time have restricted him from mentioning matrimony until he have consulted his father."

"And what is the visiting to gang for, then? Away wi' him! Our Nell's food for his better. What wad

you think an she could get the Young Laird, his brother, wi' a blink o' her ee?"

"Never speak to me of that, Mrs. Jane. I wad rather see the poorest of his shepherd lads coming to court my child than see him;" and with these words Henry left the room.

Mrs. Jane stood long, making faces, shaking her apron with both hands, nodding her head, and sometimes giving a stamp with her foot. "I have set my face against that connexion," said she; "our Nell's no made for a lady to a London lawyer. It wad set her rather better to be Lady of Caswy. The Young Laird, for me! I'll hae the branks of love thrown over the heads o' the twosome, tie the tangs together, and then let them gallop like twa kippled grews. My brother Henry's a simple man; he doun ken the credit that he has by his daughters—thanks to some other body than him! Niece Nell has a shape, an ee, and a lady-manner that wad killhab the best lord o' the kingdom, were he to come under their influence and my manoeuvres. She's a Jordan a' through; and that I'll let them han! Folk are a' wise ahint the hand; credit only comes by catch and keep. Goodnight to a' younger brothers, puffings o' love vows, and sails o' wind! Gie me the good green hills, the gruff wedders, and bob-tail'd yowes; and let the Law and the Gospel-men sell the wind o' their lungs as dear as they can."

In a few days, Henry of Drumfielding was called out to attend his Chief on some expedition; on which Mrs Jane, not caring to trust her message to any other person, went over to Cassway, and invited the Young Laird to Drumfielding to see her niece, quite convinced that her charms and endowments would at once enslave the elder brother as they had done the younger. Tam Beattie was delighted at finding such a good back friend as Mrs Jane, for he had not failed to observe, for a twelvemonth back, that Ellen Scott was very pretty, and, either through chance or design, he asked Mrs Jane if the young lady was privy to this invitation.

“*She* privy to it!” exclaimed Mrs Jane, shaking her apron. “Ha, weel I wat, no! She wad soon hae floun in my face wi’ her gibery and her jaukery, had I tauld her my errand; but the gowk kens what the titling wants, although it is not aye crying, *Give, give,* like the horse lech-leech.”

“Does the horse-leech really cry that, Mrs Jane? I should think, from a view of its mouth, that it could scarcely cry any thing,” said Tom.

“Are ye sic a reprobate as to deny the words o’ the Scripture, sir? Hech, wae’s me! what some folk hae to answer for! We’re a’ wise ahint the hand. But hark ye,—come ye ower in time, else I am feared she may be settled for ever out o’ your reach. Now, I

canna bide to think on that, for I have always thought you twa made for ane anither. Let me take a look o' you frae tap to toe—O yes—made for ane anither. Come ower in time, befores billy Harry come hame again; and let your visit be in timeous hours, else I'll gie you the back of the door to keep.—Wild reprobate!" she exclaimed to herself, on taking her leave; "to deny that the horse loch-leech can speak! Ha—ho—The Young Laird is the man for me!"

Thomas Beattie was true to his appointment, as may be supposed, and Mrs Jane having her niece dressed in style, he was perfectly charmed with her; and really it cannot be denied that Ellen was as much delighted with him. She was young, gay, and frolicsome, and Ellen never spent a more joyous and happy afternoon, or knew before what it was to be in a presence that delighted her so much. While they sat conversing, and apparently better satisfied with the company of each other than was likely to be regarded with indifference by any other individual aspiring to the favour of the young lady, the door was opened, and there entered no other than Francis Beattie! When Ellen saw her devoted lover appear thus suddenly, she blushed deeply, and her glee was damped in a moment. She looked rather like a condemned criminal, or at least a guilty creature, than what she really was,—a being over

whose mind the cloud of guilt had never cast its shadow.

Francis loved her above all things on earth or in heaven, and the moment he saw her so much abashed at being surprised in the company of his brother, his spirit was moved to jealousy—to maddening and uncontrollable jealousy. His ears rang, his hair stood on end, and the contour of his face became like a bent bow. He walked up to his brother with his hand on his hilt, and, in a state of excitement which rendered his words inarticulate, addressed him thus, while his teeth ground together like a horse-rattle :

“ Pray, sir, may I ask you of your intentions, and of what you are seeking here ? ”

“ I know not, Frank, what right you have to ask any such questions ; but you will allow that I have a right to ask at you what you are seeking here at present, seeing you come so very inopportune-ly ? ”

“ Sir,” said Francis, whose passion could stay no farther parley, “ dare you put it to the issue of the sword this moment ? ”

“ Come now, dear Francis, do not act the fool and the madman both at a time. Rather than bring such a dispute to the issue of the sword between two brothers who never had a quarrel in their lives, I propose that we bring it to a much more temperate and decisive issue here where we stand, by giving the maiden

her choice. Stand you there in that corner of the room, I at this, and Ellen Scott in the middle; all in both ask her, and to whomever she comes, the prize be his. Why should we try to decide, by the loss of one of our lives, what we cannot decide, and what may be decided in a friendly and rational way in one minute?"

"It is easy for you, sir, to talk temperately and with indifference of such a trial, but not so with me. The young lady is dear to my heart."

"Well, but so is she to mine. Let us, therefore, appeal to the lady at once, whose claim is the best; and as your pretensions are the highest, do you ask her first."

"My dearest Ellen," said Francis, warmly and affectionately, "you know that my whole soul is devoted to your love, and that I aspire to it only in the most honourable way; put an end to this dispute therefore by honouring me with the preference which the unequivocal offer of my hand merits."

Ellen stood dumb and motionless, looking steadfastly down at the hem of her green jerkin, which she was nibbling with both her hands. She dared not lift an eye to either of the brothers, though apparently conscious that she ought to have recognised the claims of Francis.

"Ellen, I need not tell you that I love you," said

Thomas, in a light and careless manner, as if certain that his appeal would be successful; "nor need I attempt to tell how dearly and how long I will love you, for in faith I cannot. Will you make the discovery for yourself by deciding in my favour?"

Ellen looked up. There was a smile on her lovely face; an arch, mischievous, and happy smile, but it turned not on Thomas. Her face turned to the contrary side, but yet the beam of that smile fell not on Francis, who stood in a state of as terrible suspense between hope and fear, as a Roman Catholic sinner at the gate of heaven, who has implored of St Peter to open the gate, and awaits a final answer. The die of his fate was soon cast, for Ellen, looking one way, yet moving another, straightway threw herself into Thomas Beattie's arms, exclaiming, "Ah, Tom! I fear I am doing that which I shall rue, but I must trust to your generosity; for, bad as you are, I like you the best!"

Thomas took her in his arms, and kissed her; but before he could say a word in return, the despair and rage of his brother, breaking forth over every barrier of reason, interrupted him. "This is the trick of a coward, to screen himself from the chastisement he deserves. But you escape me not thus! Follow me if you dare!" And as he said this, Francis rushed from the house, shaking his naked sword at his brother.

Ellen trembled with agitation at the young man's

rage; and while Thomas still continued to assure her of his unalterable affection, Mrs Jane Jerdan entered, plucking her apron so as to make it twang like a bow-string.

“What’s a’ this, Squire Tammas? Are we to be habbled out o’ house and hadding by this rapturous* young lawyer o’ yours? By the souls o’ the Jerdans, I’ll kick up sic a stoure about his lugs as shall blind the juridical een o’ him! It’s queer that men should study the law only to learn to break it. Sure am I, nae gentleman, that hasna been bred a lawyer, wad come into a neighbour’s house bullyragging that gate wi’ sword in hand, malice prepense in his eye, and venom on his tongue. Just as a lassie hadna her ain freedom o’ choice, because a fool has been pleased to ask her! Haud the grip you hae, Niece Nell; ye hae made a wise choice for aince. Tam’s the man for my money! Folk are a’ wise ahint the hand, but real wisdom lies in taking time by the forelock. But, Squire Tam, the thing that I want to ken is this—Are you going to put up wi’ a’ that bullying and threatening, or do ye propose to chastise the fool according to his folly?”

“In truth, Mrs Jane, I am very sorry for my brother’s behaviour, and could not with honour yield any more than I did to pacify him. But he must be hum-

* Rapturous, i. e. outrageous.

he axes your consent to ony siccan thing, dinnae ye grant it. That's a'. Take an auld fool's advice gin ye wad prosper. Folk are a' wise ahint the hand, and sae will ye be."

"Dear, Mrs Jane, what objections can you have to Mr Francis Beattie, the most accomplished young gentleman of the whole country?"

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"*She* privy to it!" exclaimed Mrs Jane, shaking her apron. "Ha, weel I wat, no! She wad soon hae floun in my face wi' her gibery and her jaukery, had I tauld her my errand; but the gowk kens what the titling wants, although it is not aye crying, *Give, give,* like the horse leech-leech."

"Does the horse-leech really cry that, Mrs Jane? I should think, from a view of its mouth, that it could scarcely cry any thing," said Tom.

"Are ye sic a reprobate as to deny the words o' the Scripture, sir? Hech, wae's me! what some folk hae to answer for! We're a' wise ahint the hand. But hark ye,—come ye ower in time, else I am feared she may be settled for ever out o' your reach. Now, I

canna bide to think on that, for I have always thought you twa made for ane anither. Let me take a look o' you free tap to tae—O yes—made for ane anither. Come ower in time, before billy Harry come hame again; and let your visit be in timeous hours, else I'll gie you the back of the door to keep.—Wild reprobate!" she exclaimed to herself, on taking her leave; "to deny that the horse loch-leech can speak! Ha—he—The Young Laird is the man for me!"

Thomas Beattie was true to his appointment, as may be supposed, and Mrs Jane having her niece dressed in style, he was perfectly charmed with her; and really it cannot be denied that Ellen was as much delighted with him. She was young, gay, and frolicsome, and Ellen never spent a more joyous and happy afternoon, or knew before what it was to be in a presence that delighted her so much. While they sat conversing, and apparently better satisfied with the company of each other than was likely to be regarded with indifference by any other individual aspiring to the favour of the young lady, the door was opened, and there entered no other than Francis Beattie! When Ellen saw her devoted lover appear thus suddenly, she blushed deeply, and her glee was damped in a moiment. She looked rather like a condemned criminal, or at least a guilty creature, than what she really was,—a being over

whose mind the cloud of guilt had never cast its shadow.

Francis loved her above all things on earth or in heaven, and the moment he saw her so much abashed at being surprised in the company of his brother, his spirit was moved to jealousy—to maddening and uncontrollable jealousy. His ears rang, his hair stood on end, and the contour of his face became like a bent bow. He walked up to his brother with his hand on his hilt, and, in a state of excitement which rendered his words inarticulate, addressed him thus, while his teeth ground together like a horse-rattle :

“ Pray, sir, may I ask you of your intentions, and of what you are seeking here ? ”

“ I know not, Frank, what right you have to ask any such questions ; but you will allow that I have a right to ask at you what *you* are seeking here at present, seeing you come so very inopportune-ly ? ”

“ Sir,” said Francis, whose passion could stay no farther parley, “ dare you put it to the issue of the sword this moment ? ”

“ Come now, dear Francis, do not act the fool and the madman both at a time. Rather than bring such a dispute to the issue of the sword between two brothers who never had a quarrel in their lives, I propose that we bring it to a much more temperate and decisive issue here where we stand, by giving the maiden

her choice. Stand you there at that corner of the room, I at this, and Ellen Scott in the middle; let us both ask her, and to whomsoever she comes, the prize be his. Why should we try to decide, by the loss of one of our lives, what we cannot decide, and what may be decided in a friendly and rational way in one minute?"

"It is easy for you, sir, to talk temperately and with indifference of such a trial, but not so with me. This young lady is dear to my heart."

"Well, but so is she to mine. Let us, therefore, appeal to the lady at once, whose claim is the best; and as your pretensions are the highest, do you ask her first."

"My dearest Ellen," said Francis, humbly and affectionately, "you know that my whole soul is devoted to your love, and that I aspire to it only in the most honourable way; put an end to this dispute therefore by honouring me with the preference which the unequivocal offer of my hand merits."

Ellen stood dumb and motionless, looking steadfastly down at the hem of her green jerkin, which she was nibbling with both her hands. She dared not lift an eye to either of the brothers, though apparently conscious that she ought to have recognised the claims of Francis.

"Ellen, I need not tell you that I love you," said

Thomas, in a light and careless manner, as if certain that his appeal would be successful; "nor need I attempt to tell how dearly and how long I will love you, for in faith I cannot. Will you make the discovery for yourself by deciding in my favour?"

Ellen looked up. There was a smile on her lovely face; an arch, mischievous, and happy smile, but it turned not on Thomas. Her face turned to the contrary side, but yet the beam of that smile fell not on Francis, who stood in a state of as terrible suspense between hope and fear, as a Roman Catholic sinner at the gate of heaven, who has implored of St Peter to open the gate, and awaits a final answer. The die of his fate was soon cast, for Ellen, looking one way, yet moving another, straightway threw herself into Thomas Beattie's arms, exclaiming, "Ah, Tom! I fear I am doing that which I shall rue, but I must trust to your generosity; for, bad as you are, I like you the best!"

Thomas took her in his arms, and kissed her; but before he could say a word in return, the despair and rage of his brother, breaking forth over every barrier of reason, interrupted him. "This is the trick of a coward, to screen himself from the chastisement he deserves. But you escape me not thus! Follow me if you dare!" And as he said this, Francis rushed from the house, shaking his naked sword at his brother.

Ellen trembled with agitation at the young man's

rage; and while Thomas still continued to assure her of his unalterable affection, Mrs Jane Jerdan entered, plucking her apron so as to make it twang like a bow-string.

“What’s a’ this, Squire Tammas? Are we to be habbled out o’ house and hadding by this rapturous* young lawyer o’ yours? By the souls o’ the Jerdans, I’ll kick up sic a stoure about his lugs as shall blind the juridical een o’ him! It’s queer that men should study the law only to learn to break it. Sure am I, nae gentleman, that hasna been bred a lawyer, wad come into a neighbour’s house bullyragging that gate wi’ sword in hand, malice prepense in his eye, and venom on his tongue. Just as a lassie hadna her ain freedom o’ choice, because a fool has been pleased to ask her! Haud the grip you hae, Niece Nell; ye hae made a wise choice for aince. Tam’s the man for my money! Folk are a’ wise ahint the hand, but real wisdom lies in taking time by the forelock. But, Squire Tam, the thing that I want to ken is this—Are you going to put up wi’ a’ that bullying and threatening, or do ye propose to chastise the fool according to his folly?”

“In truth, Mrs Jane, I am very sorry for my brother’s behaviour, and could not with honour yield any more than I did to pacify him. But he must be hum-

* Rapturous, i. e. outrageous.

bled. It will not do to suffer him to carry matters with so high a hand."

"Now, wad ye be but advised and leave him to me, I would play him sic a plisky as he shouldna forget till his dying day. By the souls o' the Jerdans, I would! Now promise to me that ye winna fight him."

"O promise, promise!" cried Ellen vehemently, "for the sake of heaven's love, promise my aunt that."

Thomas smiled and shook his head, as much as if he had said, "You do not know what you are asking." Mrs Jane went on.

"Do it then—do it with a vengeance, and remember this, that wherever ye set the place o' combat, be it in hill or dale, deep linn or moss hagg, I shall have a thirdsman there to encourage you on. I shall give you a meeting you little wet of."

Thomas Beattie took all this for words of course, as Mrs Jane was well known for a raving, ranting old maid, whose vehemence few regarded, though a great many respected her for the care she had taken of her sister's family, and a greater number still regarded her with terror, as a being possessed of superhuman powers; so after many expressions of the fondest love for Ellen, he took his leave, his mind being made up how it behoved him to deal with his brother.

I forgot to mention before, that old Beattie lived at Nether Cassway with his family; and his eldest son

Thomas at Over Cassway, having, on his father's entering into a second marriage, been put in possession of that castle, and these lands. Francis, of course, lived in his father's house when in Scotland; and it was thus that his brother knew nothing of his frequent visits to Ellen Scott.

That night, as soon as Thomas went home, he dispatched a note to his brother to the following purport: That he was sorry for the rudeness and unreasonableness of his behaviour. But if, on coming to himself, he was willing to make an apology before his mistress, then he (Thomas) would gladly extend to him the right hand of love and brotherhood; but if he refused this, he would please to meet him on the Crook of Glen-dearg next morning by the sun-rising. Francis returned for answer that he would meet him at the time and place appointed. There was then no farther door of reconciliation left open, but Thomas still had hopes of managing him even on the combat field.

Francis slept little that night, being wholly set on revenge for the loss of his beloved mistress; and a little after day-break he arose, and putting himself in light armour, proceeded to the place of rendezvous. He had farther to go than his elder brother, and on coming in sight of the Crook of Glen-dearg, he perceived the latter there before him. He was wrapt in his cavalier's cloak, and walking up and down the Crook

with impassioned strides, on which Francis soliloquized as follows, as he hasted on :—" Ah ha ! so Tom is here before me ! This is what I did not expect, for I did not think the flagitious dog had so much spirit or courage in him as to meet me. I am glad he has ! for how I long to chastise him, and draw some of the pampered blood from that vain and insolent heart, which has bereaved me of all I held dear on earth !"

In this way did he cherish his wrath till close at his brother's side, and then, addressing him in the same insolent terms, he desired him to cease his cowardly cogitations and draw. His opponent instantly wheeled about, threw off his horseman's cloak, and presented his sword ; and behold the young man's father stood before him, armed and ready for action ! The sword fell from Francis's hand, and he stood appalled as if he had been a statue, unable either to utter a word or move a muscle.

" Take up thy sword, caitiff, and let it work thy ruthless work of vengeance here. Is it not better that thou shouldst pierce this old heart, worn out with care and sorrow, and chilled by the ingratitude of my race, than that of thy gallant and generous brother, the representative of our house, and the Chief of our name ? Take up thy sword, I say, and if I do not chastise thee as thou deservest, may Heaven reft the sword of justice from the hand of the avenger !"

"The God of Heaven forbid that I should ever lift my sword against my honoured father," said Francis.

"Thou darest not, thou traitor and coward," returned the father.—"I throw back the disgraceful terms in thy teeth which thou usedst to thy brother. Thou camest here boiling with rancour, to shed his blood; and when I appear in person for him, thou darest not accept the challenge."

"You never did me wrong, my dear father: but my brother has wronged me in the tenderest part."

"Thy brother never wronged thee intentionally, thou deceitful and sanguinary fratricide. It was thou alone who forced this quarrel upon him; and I have great reason to suspect thee of a design to cut him off, that the inheritance and the maid might both be thine own. But here I swear by the arm that made me, and the Redeemer that saved me, if thou wilt not go straight and kneel to thy brother for forgiveness, confessing thy injurious treatment, and swearing submission to thy natural Chief, I will banish thee from my house and presence for ever, and load thee with a parent's curse, which shall never be removed from thy soul till thou art crushed to the lowest hell."

The young scholar, being utterly astounded at his father's words, and at the awful and stern manner in which he addressed him, whom he had never before reprimanded, was wholly overcome. He kneeled to his

parent, and implored his forgiveness, promising, with tears, to fulfil every injunction which it would please him to enjoin ; and on this understanding, the two parted on amicable and gracious terms.

Francis went straight to the tower of Over Cassway, and inquired for his brother, resolved to fulfil his father's stern injunctions to the very letter. He was informed his brother was in his chamber in bed, and indisposed. He asked the porter farther, if he had not been forth that day, and was answered, that he had gone forth early in the morning in armour, but had quickly returned, apparently in great agitation, and betaken himself to his bed. Francis then requested to be taken to his brother, to which the servant instantly assented, and led him up to the chamber, never suspecting that there could be any animosity between the two only brothers ; but on John Burgess opening the door, and announcing the Tutor, Thomas, being in a nervous state, was a little alarmed. " Remain in the room there, Burgess," said he.—" What, brother Frank, are you seeking here at this hour, armed capapee ? I hope you are not come to assassinate me in my bed ?"

" God forbid, brother," said the other ; " here John, take my sword down with you, I want some private conversation with Thomas." John did so, and the following conversation ensued ; for as soon as the door closed, Francis dropt on his knees, and said, " O,

my dear brother, I have erred grievously, and am come to confess my crime, and implore your pardon."

"We have both erred, Francis, in suffering any earthly concern to incite us against each other's lives. We have both erred, but you have my forgiveness cheerfully; here is my hand on it, and grant me thine in return. Oh, Francis, I have got an admonition this morning, that never will be erased from my memory, and which has caused me to see my life in a new light. What or whom think you I met an hour ago on my way to the Crook of Glen-dearg to encounter you?"

"Our father, perhaps."

"You have seen him, then?"

"Indeed I have, and he has given me such a reprimand for severity, as son never before received from a parent."

"Brother Frank, I must tell you, and when I do, you will not believe me—It *was not* our father whom we both saw this morning."

"It was no other whom I saw. What do you mean? Do you suppose that I do not know my own father?"

"I tell you it was not, and could not be. I had an express from him yesterday. He is two hundred miles from this, and cannot be in Scotland sooner than three weeks hence."

— You astonish me, Thomas. This is beyond human comprehension.”

— It is true—that I avouch, and the certainty of it has sickened me at heart. You must be aware that he came not home last night, and that his horse and retinue have not arrived.”

“ He was not at home, it is true, nor have his horse and retinue arrived in Scotland. Still there is no denying that our father is here, and that it was he who spoke to and admonished me.”

“ I tell you it is impossible. A spirit hath spoke to us in our father's likeness, for he is not, and cannot be, in Scotland at this time. My faculties are altogether confounded by the event, not being able to calculate on the qualities or condition of our monitor. An evil spirit it certainly could not be, for all its admonitions pointed to good. I sorely dread, Francis, that our father is no more—that there has been another engagement, that he has lost his life, and that his soul has been lingering around his family before taking its final leave of this sphere. I believe that our father is dead ; and for my part I am so sick at heart, that my nerves are all unstrung. Pray, do you take horse and post off for Salop, from whence his commission to me yesterday was dated, and see what hath happened to our revered father.”

“ I cannot, for my life, give credit to this, brother,

or that it was any other being but my father himself who rebuked me. Pray allow me to tarry another day at least, before I set out. Perhaps our father may appear in the neighbourhood, and may be concerning himself for some secret purpose.—Did you tell him of our quarrel?”

“No. He never asked me concerning it, but charged me sharply with my intent on the first word, and adjured me, by my regard for his blessing, and my hope in heaven, to desist from my purpose.”

“Then he knew it all intuitively; for when I first went in view of the spot appointed for our meeting, I perceived him walking sharply to and fro, wrapped in his military cloak. He never so much as deigned to look at me, till I came close to his side, and thinking it was yourself, I fell to upbraiding him, and desired him to draw. He then threw off his cloak, drew his sword, and, telling me he came in your place, dared me to the encounter. But he knew all the grounds of our quarrel minutely, and laid the blame on me. I own I am a little puzzled to reconcile circumstances, but am convinced my father is near at hand. I heard his words, and saw his eyes flashing anger and indignation. Unfortunately I did not touch him, which would have put an end to all doubts; for he did not present the hand of reconciliation to me, as I expected he would have

done, on my yielding implicitly to all his injunctions."

The two brothers then parted, with protestations of mutual forbearance in all time coming, and with an understanding, as that was the morning of Saturday, that if their father, or some word of him, did not reach home before the next evening, the Tutor of Cassway was to take horse for the county of Salop, early on Monday morning.

Thomas, being thus once more left to himself, could do nothing but toss and tumble in his bed, and reflect on the extraordinary occurrence of that morning; and, after many troubled cogitations, it at length occurred to his recollection what Mrs. Jane Jerdan had said to him:—"Do it then. Do it with a vengeance!—But remember this, that wherever ye set the place of combat, be it in hill or dale, deep linn, or moss hagg, I shall have a thirdsman there to encourage you on, I shall give you a meeting you little wot of."

If he was confounded before, he was ten times more so at the remembrance of these words, of most ominous import.

At the time he totally disregarded them, taking them for mere rodomontade; but now the idea was to him terrible, that his father's spirit, like the prophet's of old, should have been conjured up by witchcraft; and then again he bethought himself that no witch

would have employed her power to prevent evil. In the end, he knew not what to think, and so, taking the hammer from its rest, he gave three raps on the pipe dram, for there were no bells in the towers of those days, and up came old John Burgess, Thomas Bontie's henchman, huntsman, and groom of the chambers. One who had been attached to the family for fifty years, and he says, in his slow West-Border tongue, "How's tou now, callan'?—Is tou ony betterfine? There has been tway stags seen in the Bloodhope-Linnis m'worning already."

"Ay, and there has been something else seen, John, that lies nearer to my heart, to-day." John looked at his master with an inquisitive eye and quivering lip, but said nothing. The latter went on, "I am very unwell to-day, John, and cannot tell what is the matter with me. I think I am bewitched."

"It's very like tou is, callan. I pits nae doubt on't at a'."

"Is there any body in this moor district whom you ever heard blamed for the horrible crime of witchcraft?"

"Ay, that there is; mair than ane or tway. There's our neighbour, Lucky Jerdan, for instance, and her niece Nell,—the warst o' the pair, I doubt." John said this with a sly stupid leer, for he had admitted the old lady to an audience with his master the day before, and

had eyed him afterwards bending his course towards Drumfielding.

"John, I am not disposed to jest at this time; for I am disturbed in mind, and very ill. Tell me, in reality, did you ever hear Mrs Jane Jerdan accused of being a witch?"

"Why, look thee, master, I dares nae say she's a wotch; for Lucky has mony good points in her character. But it's weel kenned she has mair power nor her ain, for she can stwop a' the plews in Eskdale wi' a wave o' her hand, and can raise the dead out o' their graves, just as a matter o' cwoorse."

"That, John, is an extraordinary power indeed. But did you never hear of her sending any living men to their graves? For as that is rather the danger that hangs over me, I wish you would take a ride over and desire Mrs Jane to come and see me. Tell her I am ill, and request of her to come and see me."

"I shall do that, callan'. But are tou sure it is the auld wotch I'm to bring? For it strikes me the young ane maybe has done the deed; and if sae, she is the fittest to effect the cure. But I sall bring the auld ane—Dinna flee intil a rage, for I sall bring the auld ane; though, gude forgie me, it is unco like bringing the houdy."

Away went John Burgess to Drumfielding; but Mrs Jane would not move for all his entreaties. She sent

back word to his master, to "rise out o' his bed, for he wad be waur if ony thing ailed him; and if he had aught to say to auld Jane Jerdan, she would be ready to hear it at hame, though he behoved to remember that it wasna ilka subject under the sun that she could thole to be questioned anent."

With this answer John was forced to return, and there being no accounts of old Beattie having been seen in Scotland, the young men remained all the Sabbath-day in the utmost consternation at the apparition of their father they had seen, and the appalling rebuke they had received from it. The most incredulous mind could scarce doubt that they had had communion with a supernatural being; and not being able to draw any other conclusion themselves, they became persuaded that their father was dead; and accordingly, both prepared for setting out early on Monday morning towards the county of Salop, from whence they had last heard of him.

But just as they were ready to set out, when their spurs were buckled on and their horses bridled, Andrew Johnston, their father's confidential servant, arrived from the place to which they were bound. He had rode night and day, never once stinting the light gallop, as he said, and had changed his horse seven times. He appeared as if his ideas were in a state of derangement and confusion; and when he saw his young masters standing together, and ready-mounted for a jour-

say, he said as much as if he sincerely believed his own words. They of course asked immediately about the cause of his export: but his answers were equivocal, and he appeared not to be able to assign any motive. They asked him concerning their father, and if any thing extraordinary had happened to him. He would not say either that there had, or that there had not; but inquired, in his turn, if nothing extraordinary had happened with them at home. They looked to one another, and returned him no answer; but at length the youngest said, "Why, Andrew, you profess to have ridden exports for the distance of two hundred miles; now, you surely must have some guess for what purpose you have done this? Say, then, at once, what your message is: Is our father alive?"

"Ye—es; I think he is."

"You *think* he is? Are you uncertain, then?"

"I am certain he is not *dead*,—at least was not when I left him. But—hum—certainly there has a change taken place. Hark ye, masters—can a man be said to be in life when he is out of himself?"

"Why, man, keep us not in this thrilling suspense. —Is our father well?"

"No—not *quite* well. I am sorry to say, honest gentleman, that he is not. But the truth is, my masters, now that I see you well and hearty, and about to take a journey in company, I begin to suspect that I

have been posted all this way on a fool's errand : and not another syllable will I speak on the subject, till I have had some refreshment, and if you still insist on hearing a ridiculous story, you shall hear it then."

When the matter of the refreshment had been got over to Andrew's full satisfaction, he began as follows :

" Why, faith, you see, my masters, it is not easy to say my errand to you, for in fact I have none. Therefore, all that I can do is to tell you a story,—a most ridiculous one it is, as ever sent a poor fellow out on the gallop for the matter of two hundred miles or so. On the morning before last, right early, little Iwan, the page, comes to me, and he says,—' Johnston, thou must go and visit measter. He's bad.'

" ' Bad !' says I. ' Whaten way is he bad ?'

" ' Why,' says he, ' he's so far ill as he's not well and desires to see you without one moment's delay. He's in fine taking, and that you'll find ; but whateer do I stand here ? Lword, I never got such a fright. Why, Johnston, does thou know that measter hath lwoost himself ?'

" ' How lost himself ? rabbit,' says I, ' speak plain out, else I'll have thee lug-hauled, thou dwarf !' for my blood rose at the imp, for fooling at my mishap of my master's. But my choler only made him worse, for there is not a greater deil's-buckie in all the Five Dales.

“ ‘ Why, man, it is true that I said,’ quoth he, laughing; ‘ the old gurlly squoir hath lwoost himself; and it will be grand sport to see thee going calling him at all the steane-crosses in the kingdom, in this here way—Ho yes! and a two times ho yes! and a *three* times ho yes! Did any body no see the better half of my measter, Laird of the twa Cassways, Bloodhope, and Pantland, which was amissing overnight, and is supposed to have gone a-wool-gathering? If any body hath seen that better part of my measter, whilk contains as mooch wit as a man could drive on a hurlbarrow, let them restore it to me, Andrew Johnston, piper, trumpeter, whacker, and wheedler, to the same great and noble squoir; and high shall be his reward—Ho yes!’

“ ‘ The devil restore thee to thy right mind!’ said I, knocking him down, and leaving him sprawling in the kennel, and then hasted to my master, whom I found feverish, restless, and raving, and yet with an earnestness in his demeanour that stunned and terrified me. He seized my hand in both his, which were burning like fire, and gave me such a look of despair as I shall never forget. ‘ Johnston, I am ill,’ said he, ‘ grievously ill, and know not what is to become of me. Every nerve in my body is in a burning heat, and my soul is as it were torn to fitters with amazement. Johnston, as sure as you are in the body, something most deplorable hath happened to em.’

“ ‘ Yes, as sure as I am in the body, there has, master,’ says L. ‘ But I’ll have you bled and doctured in style ; and you shall soon be as sound as a reech.’ says I ; ‘ for a gentleman must not lose heart altogether for a little fire-raising in his outworks, if it does not reach the citadel,’ says I to him. But he cut me short by shaking his head and flinging my hand from him.

“ ‘ A truce with your talking,’ says he. ‘ That which hath befallen me is as much above your comprehension as the sun is above the earth, and never will be comprehended by mortal man : but I must inform you of it, as I have no other means of gaining the intelligence I yearn for, and which I am incapable of gaining personally. Johnston, there never was a mortal man suffered what I have suffered since midnight. I believe I have had doings with hell ; for I have been disembodied, and embodied again, and the intensity of my tortures has been unparalleled.—I was at home this morning at day-break.’

“ ‘ At home at Cassway !’ says L. ‘ I am sorry to hear you say so, master, because you know, or should know, that the thing is impossible, you being in the ancient town of Shrewsbury on the King’s business.’

“ ‘ I was at home in very deed, Andrew,’ returned he ; ‘ but whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell—the Lord only knoweth. But there I was in this guise, and with this heart and all its feelings

within me, where I saw scenes, heard words, and spoke others, which I will here relate to you. I had finished my dispatches last night by midnight, and was sitting musing on the hard fate and improvidence of my sovereign master, when, ere ever I was aware, a neighbour of ours, Mrs Jane Jerdan, of Drumfielding, a mysterious character, with whom I have had some strange doings in my time, came suddenly into the chamber, and stood before me. I accosted her with doubt and terror, asking what had brought her so far from home.'

" ' You are not so far from home as you imagine,' said she ; ' and it is fortunate for some that it is so. Your two sons have quarrelled about the possession of niece Ellen, and though the eldest is blameless of the quarrel, yet has he been forced into it, and they are engaged to fight at day-break at the Crook of Glen-dearg. There they will assuredly fall by each other's hands, if you interpose not ; for there is no other authority now on earth that can prevent this woful calamity.'

" ' Alas ! how can I interfere,' said I, ' at this distance ? It is already within a few hours of the meeting, and before I get from among the windings of the Severn, their swords will be bathed in each other's blood ! I must trust to the interference of Heaven.'

" ' Is your name and influence, then, to perish for ever ?' said she. Is it so soon to follow your master's,

the great Maxwell of the Dales, into utter oblivion? Why not rather rouse into requisition the energies of the spirits that watch over human destinies? At least step aside with me, that I may disclose the scene to your eyes. You know I can do it; and you may then act according to your natural impulse.'

"Such were the import of the words she spoke to me, if not the very words themselves. I understood them not at the time; nor do I yet. But when she had done speaking, she took me by the hand, and hurried me towards the door of the apartment, which she opened, and the first step we took over the threshold, we stepped into a void space, and fell downward. I was going to call out, but felt my descent so rapid, that my voice was stifled, and I could not so much as draw my breath. I expected every moment to fall against something, and be dashed to pieces; and I shut my eyes, clenched my teeth, and held by the dame's hand with a frenzied grasp, in expectation of the catastrophe. But down we went—down and down, with a celerity which tongue cannot describe, without light, breath, or any sort of impediment. I now felt assured that we had both at once stepped from off the earth, and were hurled into the immeasurable void. The airs of darkness sung in my ears with a booming din as I rolled down the steeps of everlasting night, an outcast from nature and all its harmonies, and a journeyer into the depths of hell.

“ ‘ I still held my companion’s hand, and felt the pressure of hers ; and so long did this our alarming descent continue, that I at length caught myself breathing once more, but as quick as if I had been in the height of a fever. I then tried every effort to speak, but they were all unavailing ; for I could not emit one sound, although my lips and tongue fashioned the words. Think, then, of my astonishment, when my companion sung out the following stanza with the greatest glee :—

‘ Here we roll,
Body and soul,
Down to the deeps of the Paynim’s goal—
With speed and with spell,
With yo and with yell,
This is the way to the palace of hell—
Sing Yo ! Ho !
Level and low,
Down to the Valley of Vision we go !’

“ ‘ Ha, ha, ha ! Tam Beattie,’ added she, ‘ where is a’ your courage now ? Cannot ye lift up your voice and sing a stave wi’ your auld crony ? And cannot ye lift up your een, and see what region you are in now ?’

“ ‘ I did force open my eyelids, and beheld light, and apparently worlds, or huge lurid substances, gliding by me with speed beyond that of the lightning of heaven. I certainly perceived light, though of a dim uncertain nature ; but so precipitate was my descent, I could not distinguish from whence it proceeded, or of what it consisted, whether of the vapours of chaotic

wastes, or the streamers of hell. So I again shut my eyes closer than ever, and waited the event in silence unutterable.

“ ‘ We at length came upon something which interrupted our farther progress. I had no feeling as we fell against it, but merely as if we came in contact with some soft substance that impeded our descent : and immediately afterwards I perceived that our motion had ceased.

“ ‘ What a terrible tumble we have gotten. Laird !’ said my companion. ‘ But ye are now in the place where you should be ; and deil speed the coming !’

“ ‘ So saying, she quitted my hand, and I felt as if she were wrested from me by a third object ; but still I durst not open my eyes, being convinced that I was lying in the depths of hell, or some hideous place not to be dreamt of ; so I lay still in despair, not even daring to address a prayer to my Maker. At length I lifted my eyes slowly and fearfully ; but they had no power of distinguishing objects. All that I perceived was a vision of something in nature, with which I had in life been too well acquainted. It was a glimpse of green glens, long withdrawing ridges, and one high hill, with a cairn on its summit. I rubbed my eyes to divest them of the enchantment, but when I opened them again, the illusion was still brighter and more magnificent. Then springing to my feet, I perceived that I

was lying in a little fairy ring, not one hundred yards from the door of my own hall !

“ ‘ I was, as you may well conceive, dazzled with admiration ; still I felt that something was not right with me, and that I was struggling with an enchantment ; but recollecting the hideous story told me by the bel-dame, of the deadly discord between my two sons, I hastened to watch their motions, for the morning was yet but dawning. In a few seconds after recovering my senses, I perceived my eldest son Thomas leave his tower armed, and pass on towards the place of appointment. I waylaid him, and remarked to him that he was very early astir, and I feared on no good intent. He made no answer, but stood like one in a stupor, and gazed at me. ‘ I know your purpose, son Thomas,’ said I ; ‘ so it is in vain for you to equivocate. You have challenged your brother, and are going to meet him in deadly combat ; but as you value your father’s blessing, and would deprecate his curse—as you value your hope in heaven, and would escape the punishment of hell—abandon the hideous and cursed intent, and be reconciled to your only brother.’

“ ‘ On this, my dutiful son Thomas kneeled to me, and presented his sword, disclaiming, at the same time, all intentions of taking away his brother’s life, and all animosity for the vengeance sought against himself, and thanked me in a flood of tears for my interference. I

then commanded him back to his couch, and taking his cloak and sword, hasted away to the Crook of Glendearg, to wait the arrival of his brother.' "

Here Andrew Johnston's narrative detailed the self-same circumstances recorded in a former part of this tale, as having passed between the father and his younger son, so that it is needless to recapitulate them ; but beginning where that broke off, he added, in the words of the Old Laird, " ' As soon as my son Francis had left me, in order to be reconciled to his brother, I returned to the fairy knowe and ring where I first found myself seated at daybreak. I know not why I went there, for though I considered with myself, I could discover no motive that I had for doing so, but was led thither by a sort of impulse which I could not resist, and from the same feeling spread my son's mantle on the spot, laid his sword down beside it, and stretched me down to sleep. I remember nothing farther with any degree of accuracy, for I instantly fell into a chaos of suffering, confusion, and racking dismay, from which I was only of late released by awaking from a trance, on the very seat, and in the same guise in which I was the evening before. I am certain I was at home in body or in spirit—saw my sons—spoke these words to them, and heard theirs in return. How I returned I know even less, if that is possible, than how I went ; for it seemed to me that the mysterious force that presses us to

this sphere, and supports us on it, was in my case withdrawn or subverted, and that I merely fell from one part of the earth's surface and alighted on another. Now I am so ill that I cannot move from this couch; therefore, Andrew, do you mount and ride straight home. Spare no horse-flesh, by night or by day, to bring me word of my family, for I dread that some evil hath befallen them. If you find them in life, give them many charges from me of brotherly love and affection; if not—what can I say, but, in the words of the patriarch, If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.' ”

The two brothers, in utter amazement, went together to the green ring on the top of the knoll above the Castle of Cassway, and there found the mantle lying spread, and the sword beside it. They then, without letting Johnston into the awful secret, mounted straight, and rode off with him to their father. They found him still in bed, and very ill; and though rejoiced at seeing them, they soon lost hope of his recovery, his spirits being broken and deranged in a wonderful manner. Their conversations together were of the most solemn nature, the visitation deigned to them having been above their capacity. On the third or fourth day, their father was removed by death from this terrestrial scene, and the minds of the young men were so much impressed by the whole of the circumstances, that it made a great al-

teration in their after life. Thomas, as solemnly charged by his father, married Ellen Scott, and Francis was well known afterward as the celebrated Dr Beattie of Amherst. Ellen was mother to twelve sons, and on the night that her seventh son was born, her aunt Jerdan was lost, and never more heard of, either living or dead.

This will be viewed as a most romantic and unnatural story, as without doubt it is ; but I have the strongest reasons for believing that it is founded on a literal fact, of which all the three were sensibly and positively convinced. It was published in England in Dr Beattie's lifetime, and by his acquiescence, and owing to the respectable source from whence it came, it was never disputed in that day that it had its origin in truth. It was again republished, with some miserable alterations, in a London collection of 1770, by J. Smith, at No. 15, Paternoster-Row ; and though I have seen none of these accounts, but relate the story wholly from tradition, yet the assurance attained from a friend of their existence, is a curious corroborative circumstance, and proves that, if the story was not true, the parties at least believed it to be so.

CHAPTER VIII.

TIBBY HYSLOP'S DREAM.

IN the year 1807, when on a jaunt through the valleys of Nith and Annan, I learned the following story on the spot where the incidents occurred, and even went and visited all those connected with it, so that there is no doubt with regard to its authenticity.

In a cottage called Knowe-back, on the large farm of Drumlochrie, lived Tibby Hyslop, a respectable spinster, about the age of forty I thought when I saw her, but, of course, not so old when the first incidents occurred which this singular tale relates. Tibby was represented to me as being a good Christian, not in name and profession only, but in word and in deed; and I believe I may add, in heart and in soul. Nevertheless, there was something in her manner and deportment different from other people—a sort of innocent simplicity, bordering on silliness, together with an instability of thought, that, in the eyes of many, approached to abstraction,

But then Tibby could repeat the book of the Evangelist Luke by heart, and many favourite chapters both of the Old and New Testaments; while there was scarcely one in the whole country so thoroughly acquainted with those Books from beginning to end; for, though she had read a portion every day for forty years, she had never perused any other books but the Scriptures. They were her week-day books, and her Sunday books, her books of amusement, and books of devotion. Would to God that all our brethren and sisters of the human race—the poor and comfortless, as well as the great and wise—knew as well how to estimate these books as Tibby Hyslop did!

Tibby's history is shortly this: Her mother married a sergeant of a recruiting party. The year following he was obliged to go to Ireland, and from thence nobody knew whither; but neither he nor his wife appeared again in Scotland. On their departure, they left Tibby, then a helpless babe, with her grandmother, who lived in a hamlet somewhere about Tinwald; and with that grandmother was she brought up, and taught to read her Bible, to card, spin, and work at all kinds of country labour to which women are accustomed. Jane Hervey was her grandmother's name, a woman then scarcely past her prime, certainly within forty years of age; with whom lived her elder sister, named Douglas: and with these two were the early years of

Tibby Hyslop spent, in poverty, contentment, and devotion.

At the age of eighteen, Tibby was hired at the Candlemas fair, for a great wage, to be a byre-woman to Mr Gilbert Forret, then farmer at Drumlochic. Tibby has then acquired a great deal of her mother's dangerous bloom—dangerous, when attached to poverty and so much simplicity of heart; and when she came home and told what she had done, her mother and aunt, as she always denominated the two, marvelled much at the extravagant conditions, and began to express some fears regarding her new master's designs, till Tibby put them all to rest by the following piece of simple information:

“Dear, ye ken, ye needna be feared that Mr Forret has ony design o' courting me, for dear, ye ken, he has a wife already, and five bonny bairns; and he'll never be sae daft as fa' on and court anither ane. I'se war-rant he finds ane enow for him, honest man!”

“Oh, then, you are safe enough, since he is a married man, my bairn,” said Jane.

The truth was, that Mr Forret was notorious for debauching young and pretty girls, and was known in Dumfries market by the name of Gibby Gledger, from the circumstance of his being always looking slyly after them. Perceiving Tibby so comely, and at the same

time so simple, he hired her at nearly double wages, and moreover gave her a crown as arle-money.

Tibby went home to her service, and being a pliable, diligent creature, she was beloved by all. Her master commended her for her neatness, and whenever a quiet opportunity offered, would pat her rosy cheek, and say kind things. Tibby took all these in good part, judging them tokens of approbation of her good services, and was proud of them; and if he once or twice whispered a place and an hour of assignation, she took it for a joke, and paid no farther attention to it. A whole year passed over without the worthy farmer having accomplished his cherished purpose regarding poor Tibby. He hired her to remain with him, still on the former high conditions, and moreover he said to her: "I wish your grandmother and grand-aunt would take my pleasant cottage of Knowe-back. They should have it for a mere trifle—a week's shearing or so—so long as you remain in my service; and as it is likely to be a long while before you and I part, it would be better to have them near you, that you might see them often, and attend to their wants. I could give them plenty of work through the whole year, on the best conditions. What think you of this proposal, Rosy?"—a familiar name he often called her by.

"O, I'm sure, sir, I think ye are the kindest man that ever existed. What a blessing is it when riches

open up the heart to acts of charity and benevolence ! My poor auld mother and aunty will be blythe to grip at the kind offer ; for they sit under a hard master yonder. The Almighty will bestow a blessing on you for this, sir !”

Tibby went immediately with the joyful news to her poor mother and aunt. Now, they had of late found themselves quite easy in their circumstances, owing to the large wages Tibby received, every farthing of which was added to the common stock ; and though Tibby displayed a little more finery at the meeting-house, it was her grandmother who purchased it for her, without any consent on her part. “ I am sure,” said her grandmother, when Tibby told the story of her master’s kindness and attention, “ I am sure it was the kindest intervention o’ Providence that ever happened to poor things afore, when ye fell in wi’ that kind worthy man, i’ the mids o’ a great hiring market, where ye might just as easily hae met wi’ a knave, or a niggard, as wi’ this man o’ siccan charity an’ mercy.”

“-Ay ; the wulcat maun hae his collop,
And the raven maun hae his part,
And the tod will creep through the heather,
For the bonny moor-hen’s heart,”

said old Douglas Hervey, poking the fire all the while with the tongs, and speaking only as if speaking to herself—“ Hech-wow, and lack-a-day ! but the times are

altered sair since I first saw the sun ! Poor, poor Religion, wae's me for her ! She was first driven out o' the lord's castle into the baron's ha' ; out o' the baron's ha' into the farmer's bien dwelling ; and at last out o' that into the poor cauldrie shiel, where there's naeither comfort but what she brings wi' her."

"What has set ye onna thae reflections the day, aunty?" cried Tibby aloud at her ear; for she was half deaf, and had so many flannel mutches on, besides a blue napkin, which she always wore over them all, that her deafness was nearly completed altogether.

"Oogh! what's the lassie saying?" said she, after listening a good while, till the sounds penetrated to the interior of her ear, "what's the young light-head saying about the defections o' the day? what kens she about them?—oogh! Let me see your face, dame, and find your hand, for I hae neither seen the ane, nor felt the tither, this lang and mony a day." Then taking her grand-niece by the hand, and looking close into her face through the spectacles, she added,—“Ay, it is a weel-faured sonsy face, very like the mother's that bore ye; and hers was as like *her* mother's; and there was never as muckle common sense amang a' the three as to keep a brock out o' the kail-yard. Ye hae an unto good master, I hear—oogh! I'm glad to hear't—hoh-oh-oh-oh!—verra glad. I hope it will lang continue,

this kindness. Poor Tibby!—as lang as the heart diana gang wrang, we maun excuse the head, for it'll never aince gang right. I hope they were baith made for a better warld, for nane o' them were made for this."

When she got this length, she sat hastily down, and began her daily and hourly task of carding wool for her sister's spinning, abstracting herself from all external considerations.

"I think aunty's unco parabolical the day," said Tibby to her grandmother; "what makes her that gate?"

"O dear, hinny, she's aye that gate now. She speaks to naebody but hersell," said Jane. "But—lownly be it spoken—I think whiles there's ane speaks till her again that my een canna see."

"The angels often conversed wi' good folks langsyne. I ken o' naething that can hinder them to do sae still, if they're sae disposed," said Tibby; and so the dialogue closed for the present.

Mr Forret sent his carts at the term, and removed the old people to the cottage of Knowe-back, free of all charge, like a gentleman as he was; and things went on exceedingly well. Tibby had a sincere regard for her master; and as he continued to speak to her, when alone, in a kind and playful manner, she had several times ventured to broach religion to him, trying to discover the state of his soul. Then he would shake his

head, and look demure in mockery, and repeat some grave, becoming words. Poor Tibby thought he *was* a righteous man.

But in a short time his purposes were divulged in such a manner as to be no more equivocal. That morning immediately preceding the developement of this long-cherished atrocity, Jane Hervey was awaked at an early hour by the following unintelligible dialogue in her elder sister's bed.

"Have ye seen the news o' the day, kerlin?"

"Oogh?"

"Have ye seen the news o' the day?"

"Ay, that I hae, on a braid open book, without clasp or seal. Whether will you or the deil win?"

"That depends on the citadel. If it stand out, a' the powers o' hell winna shake the fortress, nor sap a stane o' its foundation."

"Ah, the fortress is a good ane, and a sound ane; but the poor head captain!—ye ken what a sweet-lipped, turnip-headit brosey he is. O, lack-a-day, my poor Tibby Hyslop!—my innocent, kind, thowless Tibby Hyslop!"

Jane was frightened at hearing such a colloquy, but particularly at that part of it where her darling child was mentioned. She sprung from her own bed to that of her sister, and cried in her ear with a loud voice,—

“ Sister, sister Douglas, what is that you are saying about our dear bairn ? ”

“ Oogh ? I was saying naething about your bairn. She lies in great jeopardy yonder ; but nane as yet. Gang away to your bed—wow, but I was sound asleep.”

“ There’s naebody can make aught out o’ her but nonsense,” said Jane.

After the two had risen from their scanty breakfast, which Douglas had blessed with more fervency than ordinary, she could not settle at her carding, but always stopped short, and began mumbling and speaking to herself. At length, after a long pause, she looked over her shoulder, and said,—“ Jeanie, warn a ye speaking o’ ganging ower to see our bairn the day ? Haste thee and gang away, then ; and stay nouthier to put on clean bussing, kirtle, nor barrie, else ye may be an an-trin meenut or twa ower lang.”

Jane made no reply, but, drawing the skirt of her gown over her shoulders, she set out for Drumlochie, a distance of nearly a mile ; and as she went by the corner of the byre, she imagined she heard her grand-child’s voice, in great passion or distress, and ran straight into the byre, crying, “ What’s the matter wi’ you, Tibby ? what ails you, my bairn ? ” but, receiving no answer, she thought the voice must have been somewhere

without, and slid quietly away, looking everywhere, and at length went down to the kitchen.

Mr Forret, *alias* Gledging Gibby, had borne the brunt of incensed kirk-sessions before that time, and also the unlicensed tongues of mothers, roused into vehemence by the degradation of beloved daughters: but never in his life did he bear such a rebuke as he did that day from the tongue of one he had always viewed as a mere simpleton. It was a lesson—a warning of the most sublime and terrible description, couched in the pure and emphatic language of Scripture. Gibby cared not a doit for these things, but found himself felled, and exposed to his family, and the whole world, if this fool chose to do it. He was, therefore, *not* to us a part of deep hypocrisy, pretending the sincerest contrition, regretting, with tears, his momentary derangement. Poor Tibby readily believed and forgave him: and thinking it hard to ruin a repentant sinner in his worldly and family concerns, she promised never to divulge what had passed; and he, knowing well the value of her word, was glad at having so escaped.

Jane found her grand-daughter apparently much disturbed; but having asked if she was well enough, and receiving an answer in the affirmative, she was satisfied, and only added, “Your crazed aunty wad gar me believe ye war in some jeopardy, and hurried me away to see you, without giving me leave to change a stock.”

One may easily conceive Tibby's astonishment at hearing this, considering the moment at which her grandmother arrived. As soon as the latter was gone, she kneeled before her Maker, and poured out her soul in grateful thanksgiving for her deliverance ; and, in particular, for such a manifest interference of some superior intelligence in her behalf.

"How did ye find our poor bairn the day, titty Jean ? Did she no tell ye ony thing ?" asked Douglas, on Jane's return.

"She tauld me naething, but said she was weel."

"She's ae fool, and ye're another ! If I had been her, I wad hae blazed it baith to kirk and council, — to his wife's ear, and to his minister's ! She's very weel, is she ? — Oogh ! Ay. Hoh — oh — oh — oh ! — silly woman — silly woman — Hoh — oh — oh !"

In a few weeks, Mr Forret's behaviour to his simple dairymaid altered very materially. He called her no more by the endearing name of Rosy ; poor idiot was oftener the term ; and finding he was now safe from accusation, his malevolence towards her had scarcely any bounds. She made out her term with difficulty, but he refused to pay the stipulated wage, on pretence of her incapacity ; and as she had by that time profited well at his hand, she took what he offered, thanked him, and said no more about it. She was no more hired as a servant, but having at the first taken a long lease

of the cottage, she continued, from year to year, working on the farm by the day, at a very scanty allowance. Old Douglas in a few years grew incapable of any work, through frailty of person, being constantly confined to bed, though in mind as energetic and mysterious as ever. Jane wrought long, till at length a severe illness in 1799 rendered her unfit to do any thing further than occasionally knit a stocking; and Tibby's handywork was all that herself and the two old women had to depend upon. They had brought her up with care and kindness amid the most pinching poverty, and now, indeed, her filial affection was severely put to the proof; but it was genuine, and knew no bounds. Night and day she toiled for her aged and feeble relatives, and a murmur or complaint never was heard from her lips. Many a blessing was bestowed on her as they raised their palsied heads to partake of her hard-earned pittance; and many a fervent prayer was poured out, when no mortal heard it.

Times grew harder and harder. Thousands yet living remember what a period that was for the poor, while meal, for seasons, was from four to five shillings a stone, and even sometimes as high as seven. Tibby grew fairly incapable of supporting herself and her aged friends. She stinted herself for their sakes, and that made her still more incapable; yet often with tears in her eyes did she feed these frail beings, her heart like

to melt because she had no more to give them. There are no poor-rates in that country. Knowe-back is quite retired—nobody went near it, and Tibby complained to none, but wrought on, night and day, in sorrow and anxiety, but still with a humble and thankful heart.

In this great strait, Mrs Forret was the first who began, unsolicited, to take compassion on the destitute group. She could not conceive how they existed on the poor creature's earnings. So she went privately to see them, and when she saw their wretched state, and heard their blessings on their dear child, her heart was moved to pity, and she determined to assist them in secret; for her husband was such a churl, that she durst not venture to do it publicly. Accordingly, whenever she had an opportunity, she made Tibby come into the kitchen, and get a meal for herself; and often the considerate lady slid a small loaf, or a little tea and sugar, into her lap, for the two aged invalids;—for gentle woman is always the first to pity, and the first to relieve.

Poor Tibby! how her heart expanded with gratitude on receiving these little presents! for her love for the two old dependent creatures was of so pure and sacred a sort, as scarcely to retain in it any thing of the common feelings of humanity. There was no selfish principle there—they were to her as a part of her own nature.

Tibby never went into the kitchen unless her mistress desired her, or sent her word by some of the other day-labourers to come in as she went home. One evening, having got word in this last way, she went in, and the lady of the house, with her own hand, presented her with a little bowl of heat potatoes, and some milk. This was all; and one would have thought it was an aliment so humble and plain, that scarcely any person would have grudged it to a hungry dog. It so happened, however, that as Tibby was sitting behind her, enjoying the meal, Mr Forret chanced to come into the kitchen to give some orders; and perceiving Tibby so comfortably engaged, he, without speaking a word, seized her by the neck with one hand, and by the shoulder with the other, and hurrying her out at the back-door into the yard, flung her, with all his might, as a dunghill. "Wha the devil bade you come into my house, and eat up the meat that was made for others?" cried he, in a demoniac voice, choking with rage; and then he swore a terrible oath, which I do not choose to set down, that, "if he found her again at such employment, he would cut her throat, and fling her to the dogs."

Poor Tibby was astounded beyond the power of utterance, or even of rising from the place where he had thrown her down, until lifted by two of the maid-servants, who tried to comfort her as they supported her

part of the way home ; and bitterly did they blame their master, saying it would have been a shame to any one, who had the feelings of a man, to do such an act ; but as for their master, he scarcely had the feelings of a beast. Tibby never opened her mouth, neither to blame, nor complain, but went on her way crying till her heart was like to break.

She had no supper for the old famishing pair that night. They had tasted nothing from the time that she left them in the morning ; and as she had accounted herself sure of receiving something from Mrs Forret that night, she had not asked her day's wages from the grievance, glad to let a day run up now and then, when able to procure a meal in any other honest way. She had nothing to give them that night, so what could she do ? She was obliged, with a sore heart, to kiss them and tell them so ; and then, as was her custom, she said a prayer over their couch, and laid herself down to sleep, drowned in tears.

She had never so much as mentioned Mr Forret's name either to her grandmother or grand-aunt that night, or by the least insinuation given them to understand that he had used her ill ; but no sooner were they composed to rest, and all the cottage quiet, than old Douglas began abusing him with great vehemence. Tibby, to her astonishment, heard some of his deeds spoken of with great familiarity, which she was sure never had

been whispered to the ear of flesh. But what shocked her most of all, was the following terrible prognostication, which she heard repeated three several times:—
“Na, na, I’ll no see it, for I’ll never see aught earthly again beyond the wa’s o’ this cottage; but Tibby will live to see it;—ay, ay, she’ll see it.” Then a different voice asked—“What will she see, kerlin?”—“She’ll see the crows picking his bones at the back o’ the dyke.”

Tibby’s heart grew cold within her when she heard this terrible announcement, because, for many years bygone, she had been convinced, from sensible demonstration, that old Douglas Hervey had commerce with some superior intelligence; and after she had heard the above sentence repeated again and again, she shut her ears, that she might hear no more; committed herself twice more to the hands of a watchful Creator, and fell into a troubled sleep.

The elemental spirits that weave the shadowy tapestry of dreams, were busy at their aerial looms that night in the cottage of Knoe-back, bodying forth the destinies of men and women in brilliant and quick succession. One only of these delineations I shall here set down, precisely as it was related to me, by my friend the worthy clergyman of that parish, to whom Tibby told it the very next day. There is no doubt that her grand-aunt’s disjointed prophecy formed the groundwork of the picture; but be that as it may, this was her

down; and it was for the sake of telling it, and tracing it to its fulfilment, that I began this story :

Tibby Hyslop discovered, that on a certain spot which she had never seen before, between a stone-dyke and the verge of a woody precipice, a little, sequestered, inaccessible corner, of a triangular shape,—or, as she called it to the minister, “ a three-necked crook o’ the Inn,” she saw Mr Farret lying without his hat, with his throat slightly wounded, and blood running from it; but he neither appeared to be dead, nor yet dying, but in excellent spirits. He was clothed in a fine new black suit, had full boots on, which appeared likewise to be new, and gilt spurs. A great number of rooks and hooded crows were making free with his person;—some picking out his eyes, some his tongue, and some tearing out his bowels. In place of being distressed by their voracity, he appeared much delighted, encouraging them all that he could, and there was a perfectly good understanding between the parties. In the midst of this horrible feast, a large raven dashed down from a dark cloud, and, driving away all the meaner birds, fell a-feasting himself;—opened the breast of his victim, who was still alive, and encouraging him on; and after preying on his vitals for some time, at last picked out his heart, and devoured it; and then the mangled wretch, after writhing for a short time in convulsive agonies, groaned his last.

This was precisely Tibby's dream as it was told to me, first by my friend Mr Cunningham of Dalswinton, and afterwards by the clergyman to whom she herself had related it next day. But there was something in it not so distinctly defined; for though the birds which she saw devouring her master, were rooks, blood-crows, and a raven, still each individual of the number had a likeness, by itself, distinguishing it from all the rest; a certain character, as it were, to support; and these particular likenesses were so engraven on the dreamer's mind, that she never forgot them, and she could not help looking for them both among "birds and bodica," as she expressed it, but never could distinguish any of them again; and the dream, like many other distempered visions, was forgotten, or only remembered now and then with a certain tremor of antecedent knowledge.

Days and seasons passed over, and with them the changes incident to humanity. The virtuous and indefatigable Tibby Hyslop was assisted by the benevolent, who had heard of her exertions and patient sufferings; and the venerable Douglas Hervey had gone in peace to the house appointed for all living, when one evening in June, John Jardine, the cooper, chanced to come to Knowe-back, in the course of his girding and hooping peregrinations. John was a living and walking chronicle of the events of the day, all the way from the head of Glen-Breck to the bridge of Stony-Lee. He knew

every man, and every man's affairs—every woman, and every woman's failings; and his intelligence was not like that of many others, for it was generally to be depended on. How he got his information so correctly, was a mystery to many, but whatever John the cooper told as a fact, was never disputed, and any woman, at least, might have ventured to tell it over again.

“These are hard times for poor folks, Tibby. How are you and auld granny coming on?”

“Just fighting on as we hae done for mony a year. She is aye contentit, poor body, and thankfu', whether I hae little to gie her, or muckle. This life's naething but a fight, Johnnie, frae beginning to end.”

“It's a' true ye say, Tibby,” said the cooper, interrupting her, for he was afraid she was about to enter upon religious topics, a species of conversation that did not accord with John's talents or dispositions; “It's a' true ye say, Tibby; but your master will soon be sic a rich man now, that we'll a' be made up, and you among the lave will be made a lady.”

“If he get his riches honestly, and the blessing o' the Almighty wi' them, John, I shall rejoice in his prosperity; but neither me nor ony ither poor body will ever be muckle the better o' them. What way is he gaun to get siccan great riches? If a' be true that I hear, he is gaun to the wrang part to seek them.”

“Aha, lass, that's a' that ye ken about it. Did ye

no hear that he had won the law-plea on his laird, whilk has been afore the Lords for mair than seven years? And did ye no hear that he had won ten pleas afore the courts o' Dumfries, a' rising out o' ane anither, like ash girdings out o' ae root, and that he's to get, on the haill, about twenty thousand pounds worth o' damages?"

"That's an unco sight o' siller, John. How muckle is that?"

"Aha, lass, ye hae fixed me now; but they say it will come to as muckle gowd as six men can carry on their backs. And we're a' to get twenties, and thirties, and forties o' pounds for bribes, to gar us gie faithfu' and true evidence at the great concluding trial afore the Lords; and you are to be bribit among the rest, to gar ye tell the haill truth, and nothing but the truth."

"There needs nae waste o' siller to gar me do that. But, Johnnie, I wad like to ken whether that mode o' taking oaths,—solemn and saucered oaths,—about the miserable trash o' this warld, be according to the tenor o' Gospel revelation, and the third o' the Commands?"

"Aha, lass, ye hae fixed me now! That's rather a kittle point; but I believe it's a' true that ye say. However, ye'll get the offer of a great bribe in a few days; and take ye my advice, Tibby—Get hand o' the bribe afore hand; for if ye lippen to your master's promises, you will never finger a bodle after the job's done."

"I'm but a poor simple body, Johnnie, and canna

manage ony siccan things. But I shall need nae fee to gar me tell the truth, and I winna tell an untruth for a' my master's estate, and his sax backfu's o' gowd into the bargain. If the sin o' the soul, Johnnie——"

"Ay, ay, that's very true, Tibby, very true, indeed, about the sin o' the soul! But as ye were saying about being a simple body—What wad ye think if I were to cast up that day Gledging Gibby came here to gie you your lesson—I could maybe help you on a wee bit—What wad you gie me if I did?"

"Alack, I hae naething to gie you but my blessing; but I shall pray for the blessing o' God on ye."

"Ay, ay, as ye say. I daresay there might be waur things. But could you think o' naething else to gie a body wha likes as weel to be paid aff-hand as to gie credit? That's the very thing I'm cautioning you against."

"I dinna expect ony siller frae that fountain-head, Johnnie: It is a dry ane to the puir and the needy, and an unco sma' matter wad gar me make over my rights to a pose that I hae neither faith nor hope in. But ye're kenn'd for an auld-farrant man; if ye can bring a little honeatly my way, I sall gie you the half o't; for weel I ken it will never come by ony art or shift o' mine."

"Ay, ay, that's spoken like a sensible and reasonable woman, Tibby Hyslop, as ye are and hae always been. But think you that nae way could be contrived"—and

here the cooper gave two winks with his left eye—"by the whilk ye could gie me it a', and yet no rob yoursell of a farthing?"

"Na, na, Johnnie Jardine, that's clean aboon my comprehension: But ye're a cunning draughty man, and I leave the haill matter to your guidance."

"Very weel, Tibby, very weel. I'll try to ca' a gayan substantial gird round your success, if I can hit the width o' the chance, and the girth o' the gear. Gude day to you the day; and think about the plan o' equal-aqual that I spake o'."

Old maids are in general very easily courted, and very apt to take a hint. I have, indeed, known a great many instances in which they took hints very seriously, before ever they were given. Not so with Tibby Hyslop. So heavy a charge had lain upon her the greater part of her life, that she had never turned her thoughts to any earthly thing beside, and she knew no more what the cooper aimed at, than if the words had not been spoken. When he went away, her grandmother called her to the bedside, and asked if the cooper had gone away. Tibby answered in the affirmative; on which granny said, "What has he been hawering about sae lang the day? -I thought I heard him courting ye."

"Courting me! Dear granny, he was courting nane o' me; he was telling me how Mr Forret had won as

muckle siller at the law as sax men can carry on their backs, and how we are a' to get a part of it."

"Dinna believe him, hinny; the man that can win siller at the law, will lose it naewhere. But, Tibby, I heard the cooper courting you, and I thought I heard you gie him your consent to manage the matter as he likit. Now you hae been a great blessing to me. I thought you sent to me in wrath, as a punishment of my sins, but I have found that you were indeed sent to me in love and in kindness. You have been the sole support of my old age, and of hers wha is now in the grave, and it is natural that I should like to see you put up afore I leave you. But, Tibby Hyslop, John Jardine is not the man to lead a Christian life with. He has nae mair religion than the beasts that perish—he shuns it as a body would do a loathsome or poisonous draught: And besides, it is weel kenn'd how sair he neglected his first wife. Hae naething to do wi' him, my dear bairn, but rather live as you are. There is neither sin nor shame in being unwedded; but there may be baith in joining yourself to an unbeliever."

Tibby was somewhat astonished at this piece of information. She had not conceived that the cooper meant any thing in the way of courtship; but found that she rather thought the better of him for what it appeared he had done. Accordingly she made no promises to her grandmother, but only remarked, that "it

was a pity ne to gie the cooper a chance o' conversation, honest man."

The cooper kept watch about Drumlochie and the hinds' houses, and easily found out all the farmer's movements, and even the exact remuneration he could be prevailed on to give to such as were pleased to remember according to his wishes. Indeed it was believed that the most part of the hinds and labouring people recollected nothing of the matter in dispute farther than he was pleased to inform them, and that in fact they gave evidence to the best of their knowledge or remembrance, although that evidence might be decidedly wrong.

One day Gibby took his gun, and went out towards Kinow-back. The cooper also, guessing what his purpose was, went thither by a circuitous route, in order to come in as it were by chance. Ere he arrived, Mr Forret had begun his queries and instructions to Tibby. The two could not agree by any means; Tibby either could not recollect the yearly crops on each field on the farm of Drumlochie, or recollected wrong. At length, when the calculations were at the keenest, the cooper came in, and at every turn he took Mr Forret's side, with the most strenuous asseverations, abusing Tibby for her stupidity and want of recollection.

Hear me speak, Johnnie Jardine, afore ye condemn me aff-doof: Mr Forret says that the Crooked Holm

was pease in the 96, and corn in the 97; I say it was corn both the years. How do ye say about that?"

"Mr Forret's right—perfectly right. It grew pease in the 96, and ains good Angus ains, in the 97. Poor gowk! dinna ye think that he has a' thae things merkit down in black and white? and what good could it do to him to mislead you? Depend on't, he is right there."

"Could ye tak your oath on that, Johnnie Jardine?"

"Ay, this mornint,—six times repeated, if it were necessary."

"Then I yield—I am but a poor silly woman, liable to many errors and shortcomings—I maun be wrang, and I yield that it is sae. But I am sure, John, you cannot but remember this sae short while syne,—for ye shure wī us that har'st,—Was the lang field niest Robie Johnston's farm growing corn in the dear year, or no? I say it was."

"It was the next year, Tibby," said Mr Forret; "you are confounding one year with another again; and I see what is the reason. It was oats in 99, grass in 1800, and oats again in 1801; now you never remember any of the intermediate years, but only those that you shors on these fields. I cannot be mistaken in a rule I never break."

The cooper had now got his cue. He perceived that the plea ultimately depended on proof relating to the proper cropping of the land throughout the lease; and

he supported the farmer so strenuously, that Tibby, in her simplicity, fairly yielded, although not convinced; but the cooper assured the farmer that he would pay all to rights, provided she received a handsome acknowledgment; for there was not the least doubt that Mr Forret was right in every particular.

This speech of the cooper's gratified the farmer exceedingly, as his whole fortune now depended upon the evidence to be elicited in the court at Dumfries, on a day that was fast approaching, and he was willing to give any thing to secure the evidence on his side; so he made a long set speech to Tibby, telling her how necessary it was that she should adhere strictly to the truth—that, as it would be an awful thing to make oath to that which was false, he had merely paid her that visit to instruct her remembrance a little in that which was the truth, it being impossible, on account of his jottings, that he could be mistaken; and finally it was settled, that for thus telling the truth, and nothing but the truth, Tibby Hyslop, a most deserving woman, was to receive a present of £15, as wages for time bygone. This was all managed in a very sly manner by the cooper, who assured Forret that all should go right, as far as related to Tibby Hyslop and himself.

The day of the trial arrived, and counsel attended from Edinburgh for both parties, to take full evidence before the two Circuit Lords and Sheriff. The evidence

was said to have been unsatisfactory to the Judges, but upon the whole in Mr Forret's favour. The coo-per's was decidedly so, and the farmer's counsel were crowing and bustling immoderately, when at length Tibby Hyslop was called to the witnesses' box. At the first sight of her master's counsel, and the Dumfries writers and notaries that were hanging about him, Tibby was struck dumb with amazement, and almost bereaved of sense. She at once recognised them, all and severally, as the birds that she saw, in her dream, devouring her master, and picking the flesh from his bones; while the great lawyer from Edinburgh was, in feature, eye, and beak, the identical raven which at last devoured his vitals and heart.

This singular coincidence brought reminiscences of such a nature over her spirit, that, on the first questions being put, she could not answer a word. She knew from thenceforward that her master was a ruined man, and her heart failed, on thinking of her kind mistress and his family. The counsel then went, and whispering Mr Forret, inquired what sort of a woman she was, and if her evidence was likely to be of any avail. As the coo-per had behaved in a very satisfactory way, and had answered for Tibby, the farmer was intent on not losing her evidence, and answered his counsel that she was a worthy honest woman, who would not swear to a lie for the king's dominions, and that her evidence

was of much consequence. This intelligence the lawyer announced to the bench with great pomposity, and the witness was allowed a little time to recover her spirits.

Isabella Hyslop, spinster, was again called, answered to her name, and took the oath distinctly, and without hesitation, until the official querist came to the usual question, "Now, has any one instructed you what to say, or what you are to answer?" when Tibby replied, with a steady countenance, "Nobody, except my master." The counsel and client stared at one another, while the Court could hardly maintain their gravity of deportment. The querist went on—

"What? Do you say your master instructed you what to say?"

"Yes."

"And did he give, or promise to give you, any reward for what you were to say?"

"Yes."

"How much did he give, or promise you, for answering as he directed you?"

"He gave me fifteen pound-notes."

Here Mr Forret and his counsel, losing all patience at seeing the case take this unexpected turn, interrupted the proceedings, the latter addressing the Judges, with vehemence, to the following purport:—

"My Lords, in my client's name, and in the names

of justice and reason, I protest against proceeding with this woman's evidence, it being manifest that she is talking through a total derangement of intellect. At first she is dumb, and cannot answer nor speak a word, and now she is answering in total disregard of all truth and propriety. I appeal to your Lordships if such a *farrago* as this can be at all inferential or relevant?"

"Sir, it was but the other minute," said the junior Judge, "that you announced to us with great importance, that this woman was a person noted for honesty and worth, and one who would not tell a lie for the king's dominions. Why not then hear her evidence to the end? For my own part, I perceive no tokens of discrepancy in it, but rather a scrupulous conscientiousness. Of that, however, we shall be better able to judge when we have heard her out. I conceive that, for the sake of both parties, this woman ought to be strictly examined."

"Proceed with the evidence, Mr Wood," said the senior Lord, bowing to his assistant.

Tibby was reminded that she was on her great oath, and examined over again; but she adhered strictly to her former answers.

"Can you repeat any thing to the Court that he desired you to say?"

"Yes; he desired me, over and over again, to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

"And, in order that you should do this, he paid you down fifteen pounds sterling?"

"Yes."

"This is a very singular transaction: I cannot perceive the meaning of it. You certainly must be sensible that you made an advantageous bargain?"

"Yes."

"But you depone that he charged you to tell only the truth?"

"Yes, he did, and before witnesses, too."

Here Mr Forret's counsel began to crow again, as if the victory had been his own; but the junior Judge again took him short by saying, "Have patience, sir.—My good woman, I esteem your principles and plain simplicity very highly. We want only to ascertain the truth, and you say your master charged you to tell that only. Tell me this, then—did he not inform you what the truth was?"

"Yes. It was for that purpose he came over to see me, to help my memory to what was the truth, for fear I should hae sworn wrang; which wad hae been a great sin, ye ken."

"Yes, it would so. I thought that would be the way.—You may now proceed with your questions regularly, Mr Wood."

"Are you quite conacions, now, that those things

he brought to your remembrance were actually the truth?"

"No."

"Are you conscious they were *not* the truth?"

"Yes; at least some of them, I am sure, were not."

"Please to condescend on one instance."

"He says he has it markit in his buik, that the Crookit Houm, that lies at the back o' the wood, ye ken, grew pease in the ninety-sax, and corn in the ninety-se'en; now, it is unco queer that he should hae settin't down wrang, for the Houm was really and truly aits baith the years."

"It is a long time since; perhaps your memory may be at fault."

"If my master had not chanced to mention it, I could not have been sure, but he set me a-calculating and comparing; and my mother and me have been consulting about it, and have fairly settled it."

"And are you absolutely positive it was oats both years?"

"Yes."

"Can you mention any circumstance on which you rest your conclusions?"

"Yes; there came a great wind ae Sabbath day, in the ninety-sax, and that raised the shearers' wages, at Dumfries, to three shillings the day. We began to the Crookit Houm on a Monanday's morning, at three

shillings a-day, and that very day twalmonth, we began till't again at tenpence. We had a gude deal o' speaking about it, and I said to John Edie, 'What need we grumble? I made sae muckle at shearing, the last year, that it's no a' done yet.' And he said, 'Ah, Tibby, Tibby, but wha can hain like you?' "

"Were there any others that you think your master had marked down wrong?"

"There was ane, at ony rate—the lang field niest Robie Johnston's march: He says it was clover in the drouthy dear year, and aits the neist; but that's a year I canna forget; it was aits baith years. I lost a week's shearing on it the first year, waiting on my aunty, and the niest year she was dead; and I shore the lang field niest Robie Johnston's wi' her sickle-heuk, and black ribbons on my mutch."

The whole of Tibby's evidence went against Mr Forret's interest most conclusively, and the Judges at last dismissed her, with high compliments on her truth and integrity. The cause was again remitted to the Court of Session for revisal after this evidence taken; and the word spread over all the country that Mr Forret had won. Tibby never contradicted this, nor disputed it; but she was thoroughly convinced, that in place of winning, he would be a ruined man.

About a month after the examination at Dumfries, he received a letter from his agents in Edinburgh, buoy-

ing him up with hopes of great and instant success, and urging the utility of his presence in town at the final decision of the cause on which all the minor ones rested. Accordingly he equipped himself, and rode into Dumfries in the evening, to be ready to proceed by the mail the following morning, saying to his wife, as he went away, that he would send home his mare with the carrier, and that as he could not possibly name the day on which he would be home, she was to give herself no uneasiness. The mare was returned the following night, and put up in her own stall, nobody knew by whom; but servants are such sleepy, careless fellows, that few regarded the circumstance. This was on a Tuesday night. A whole week passed over, and still Mrs. Forret received no news of her husband, which kept her very uneasy, as their whole fortune, being, and subsistence, now depended on the issue of this great law-suit, and she suspected that the case still continued dubious, or was found to be going against him.

A more unhappy result followed than that she anticipated. On the arrival of the Edinburgh papers next week, the whole case, so important to farmers, was detailed; and it was there stated, that the great farmer and improver, Mr Forret of Drumlochrie, had not only forfeited his whole fortune by improper husbandry, and manifest breaches of the conditions on which he held his lease, but that criminal letters had been issued

against him for attempts to pervert justice, and rewards offered for his detention or seizure. This was terrible news for the family at Drumlochic ; but there were still sanguine hopes entertained that the circumstances were misstated; or, if the worst should prove true, that perhaps the husband and father might make his escape ; and as there was no word from him day after day, this latter sentiment began to be cherished by the whole family as their only remaining and forlorn hope.

But one day, as poor Tibby Hyslop was going over to the Cat Linn, to gather a burden of sticks for firewood, she was surprised, on looking over the dike, to see a great body of crows collected, all of which were so intent on their prey, that they seemed scarcely to regard her presence as a sufficient cause for their desisting; she waved her burden-rope at them over the dike, but they refused to move. Her heart nearly failed her, for she remembered of having before seen the same scene, with some fearful concomitants. But pure and unfeigned religion, the first principle of which teaches a firm reliance on divine protection, can give courage to the weakest of human beings. Tibby climbed over the dike, drove the vermin away, and there lay the corpse of her late unfortunate master, wofully mangled by these voracious birds of prey. He had bled himself to death in the jugular vein, was lying without the hat, and clothed in a fine new black suit of clothes, top-boots,

which appeared likewise to be new, and gilt spurs ; and the place where he lay was a little three-cornered sequestered spot, between the dike and the precipice, and inaccessible by any other way than through the field. It was a spot that Tibby had never seen before.

A letter was found in Mr Forret's pocket, which had blasted all his hopes, and driven him to utter distraction ; he had received it at Dumfries, returned home, and put up his mare carefully in the stable, but not having courage to face his ruined family, he had hurried to that sequestered spot, and perpetrated the deed of self-destruction.

The only thing more I have to add is, that the Lord President, having made the remark that he paid more regard to that poor woman, Isabella Hyslop's evidence, than to all the rest elicited at Dumfries, the gainers of the great plea became sensible that it was principally in consequence of her candour and invincible veracity that they were successful, and sent her a present of twenty pounds. She was living comfortably at Knowe-back when I saw her, a contented and happy old maiden.

CHAPTER IX.

MARY BURNET.

THE following incidents are related as having occurred at a shepherd's house, not a hundred miles from St Mary's Loch ; but, as the descendants of one of the families still reside in the vicinity, I deem it requisite to use names which cannot be recognised, save by those who have heard the story.

John Allanson, the farmer's son of Inverlawn, was a handsome, roving, and incautious young man, enthusiastic, amorous, and fond of adventure, and one who could hardly be said to fear the face of either man, woman, or spirit. Among other love adventures, he fell a-courting Mary Burnet, of Kirkstyle, a most beautiful and innocent maiden, and one who had been bred up in rural simplicity. She loved him, but yet she was afraid of him ; and though she had no objection to meeting with him among others, yet she carefully avoided meeting him alone, though often and earnestly urged to it. One day, the young man, finding an opportuni-

ty, at Our Lady's Chapel, after mass, urged his suit for a private meeting so ardently, and with so many vows of love and sacred esteem, that Mary was so far won, as to promise, that *perhaps* she would come and meet him.

The trysting place was a little green sequestered spot, on the very verge of the lake, well known to many an angler, and to none better than the writer of this old tale; and the hour appointed, the time when the King's Elwand (now foolishly termed the Belt of Orion) set his first golden knob above the hill. Allanson came too early; and he watched the sky with such eagerness and devotion, that he thought every little star that arose in the south-east the top knob of the King's Elwand. At last the Elwand did arise in good earnest, and then the youth, with a heart palpitating with agitation, had nothing for it but to watch the heathery brow by which bonny Mary Burnet was to descend. No Mary Burnet made her appearance, even although the King's Elwand had now measured its own equivocal length five or six times up the lift.

Young Allanson now felt all the most poignant miseries of disappointment; and, as the story goes, uttered in his heart an unhallowed wish—he wished that some witch or fairy would influence his Mary to come to him in spite of her maidenly scruples. This wish was thrice repeated with all the energy of disappointed

long. It was thrice repeated, and no more, when, behold, Mary appeared on the brae, with wild and eccentric motions, speeding to the appointed place. Allanson's excitement seems to have been more than he was able to bear, as he instantly became delirious with joy, and always professed that he could remember nothing of their first meeting, save that Mary remained silent, and spoke not a word, neither good nor bad. In a short time she fell a-sobbing and weeping, refusing to be comforted, and then, uttering a piercing shriek, sprang up, and ran from him with amazing speed.

At this part of the loch, which, as I said, is well known to many, the shore is overhung by a precipitous cliff, of no great height, but still inaccessible, either from above or below. Save in a great drought, the water comes to within a yard of the bottom of this cliff, and the intermediate space is filled with rough unshapely pieces of rock fallen from above. Along this narrow and rude space, hardly passable by the angler at noon, did Mary bound with the swiftness of a kid, although surrounded with darkness. Her lover, pursuing with all his energy, called out, "Mary! Mary! my dear Mary, stop and speak with me. I'll conduct you home, or anywhere you please, but do not run from me. Stop, my dearest Mary—stop!"

Mary would not stop; but ran on, till, coming to a little cliff that jutted into the lake, round which there

was no passage, and, perceiving that her lover would there overtake her, she uttered another shriek, and plunged into the lake. The loud sound of her fall into the still water rung in the young man's ears like the knell of death; and if before he was crazed with love, he was now as much so with despair. He saw her floating lightly away from the shore towards the deepest part of the loch; but, in a short time, she began to sink, and gradually disappeared, without uttering a throb or a cry. A good while previous to this, Allanson had flung off his bonnet, shoes, and coat, and plunged in. He swam to the place where Mary disappeared; but there was neither boil nor gurgle on the water, nor even a bell of departing breath, to mark the place where his beloved had sunk. Being strangely impressed, at that trying moment, with a determination to live or die with her, he tried to dive, in hopes either to bring her up or to die in her arms; and he thought of their being so found on the shore of the lake, with a melancholy satisfaction; but by no effort of his could he reach the bottom, nor knew he what distance he was still from it. With an exhausted frame, and a despairing heart, he was obliged again to seek the shore, and, dripping wet as he was, and half naked, he ran to her father's house with the woful tidings. Every thing there was quiet. The old shepherd's family, of whom Mary was the youngest, and sole daughter, were all sunk in silent

repose; and oh how the distracted lover wept at the thoughts of wakening them to hear the doleful tidings! But, waken them he must; so, going to the little window close by the goodman's bed, he called, in a melancholy tone, "Andrew! Andrew Burnet, are you waking?"

"Troth, man, I think I be: or, at least, I'm half-and-half. What hast thou to say to auld Andrew Burnet at this time o' night?"

"Are you waking, I say?"

"Gudewife, am I waking? Because if I be, tell that stravaiger sae. He'll maybe tak your word for it, for mine he wianna tak."

"O Andrew, none of your humour to-night;—I bring you tidings the most woful, the most dismal, the most heart-rending, that ever were brought to an honest man's door."

"To his window, you mean," cried Andrew, bolting out of bed, and proceeding to the door. "Gude sauff us, man, come in, whaever you be, and tell us your tidings face to face; and then we'll can better judge of the truth of them. If they be in concord wi' your voice, they are melancholy indeed. Have the reavers come, and are our kye driven?"

"Oh, alas! waur than that—a thousand times waur than that! Your daughter—your dear beloved and only daughter, Mary—"

"What of Mary?" cried the goodman. "What of Mary?" cried her mother, shuddering and groaning with terror; and at the same time she kindled a light."

The sight of their neighbour, half-naked, and dripping with wet, and madness and despair in his looks, sent a chillness to their hearts, that held them in silence, and they were unable to utter a word, till he went on thus—"Mary is gone; your darling and mine is lost, and sleeps this night in a watery grave,—and I have been her destroyer!"

"Thou art mad, John Allanson," said the old man, vehemently, "raving mad; at least I hope so. Wicked as thou art, thou hadst not the heart to kill my dear child. O yes, you are mad—God be thanked, you are mad. I see it in your looks and demeanour. Heaven be praised, you are mad! You *are* mad; but you'll get better again. But what do I say?" continued he, as recollecting himself,—“We can soon convince our own senses. Wife, lead the way to our daughter's bed.”

With a heart throbbing with terror and dismay, old Jean Linton led the way to Mary's chamber, followed by the two men, who were eagerly gazing, one over each of her shoulders. Mary's little apartment was in the farther end of the long narrow cottage; and as soon as they entered it, they perceived a form lying on the bed, with the bed-clothes drawn over its head; and on the lid of Mary's little chest, that stood at the

bedside, her clothes were lying neatly folded, as they went to her. Hope seemed to dawn on the faces of the two old people when they beheld this, but the lover's heart sunk still deeper in despair. The father called her name, but the form on the bed returned no answer; however, they all heard distinctly sobs, as of one weeping. The old man then ventured to pull down the clothes from her face; and, strange to say, there indeed lay Mary Burnet, drowned in tears, yet apparently nowise surprised at the ghastly appearance of the three naked figures. Allanson gasped for breath, for he remained still incredulous. He touched her clothes—he lifted her robes one by one,—and all of them were dry, neat, and clean, and had no appearance of having sunk in the lake.

There can be no doubt that Allanson was confounded by the strange event that had befallen him, and felt like one struggling with a frightful vision, or some energy beyond the power of man to comprehend. Nevertheless, the assurance that Mary was there in life, weeping although she was, put him once more beside himself with joy; and he kneeled at her bedside, beseeching permission but to kiss her hand. She, however, repulsed him with disdain, saying, with great emphasis—“You are a bad man, John Allanson, and I entreat you to go out of my sight. The sufferings that I have undergone this night, have been beyond the

power of flesh and blood to endure ; and by some cursed agency of yours have these sufferings been brought about. I therefore pray you, in His name, whose law you have transgressed, to depart out of my sight."

Wholly overcome by conflicting passions, by circumstances so contrary to one another, and so discordant with every thing either in the works of Nature or Providence, the young man could do nothing but stand like a rigid statue, with his hands lifted up, and his visage like that of a corpse, until led away by the two old people from their daughter's apartment. They then lighted up a fire to dry him, and began to question him with the most intense curiosity ; but they could elicit nothing from him, but the most disjointed exclamations—such as, " Lord in Heaven, what can be the meaning of this !" And at other times—" It is all the enchantment of the devil ; the evil spirits have got dominion over me !"

Finding they could make nothing of him, they began to form conjectures of their own. Jean affirmed that it had been the Mermaid of the loch that had come to him in Mary's shape, to allure him to his destruction ; but Andrew Burnet, setting his bonnet to one side, and raising his left hand to a level with it, so that he might have full scope to motion and flourish, suiting his action to his words, thus began, with a face of sapience never to be excelled :—

"Gudswife, it doth strike me that thou art very wide of the mark. It must have been a spirit of a great deal higher quality than a meer-maiden, who played this extra-ordinary prank. The meer-maiden is not a spirit, but a beastly sensitive creature, with a malicious spirit within it. Now, what influence could a cauld clatch of a creature like that, wi' a tail like a great saumont-fish, hae ower our bairn, either to make her happy or unhappy? Or where could it borrow her claes, Jean? Tell me that. Na, na, Jean Linton, depend on it, the spirit that courtit wi' poor sinfu' Jock there, has been a fairy; but whether a good ane or an ill ane, it is hard to determine."

Andrew's disquisition was interrupted by the young man falling into a fit of trembling that was fearful to look at, and threatened soon to terminate his existence. Jean ran for the family cordial, observing, by the way, that "though he was a wicked person, he was still a fellow-creature, and might live to repent;" and influenced by this spark of genuine humanity, she made him swallow two horn-spoonfuls of strong aquavitæ. Andrew then put a piece of scarlet thread round each wrist, and taking a strong rowan-tree staff in his hand, he conveyed his trembling and astonished guest home, giving him at parting this sage advice:—

"I'll tell you what it is, Jock Allanson,—ye hae run a near risk o' perdition, and, escaping that for the pre-

sent, o' losing your right reason. But tak an auld man's advice—never gang again out by night to beguile ony honest man's daughter, lest a worse thing befall thee."

Next morning Mary dressed herself more neatly than usual, but there was manifestly a deep melancholy settled on her lovely face, and at times the unbidden tear would start into her eye. She spoke no word, either good or bad, that ever her mother could recollect, that whole morning; but she once or twice observed her daughter gazing at her, as with an intense and melancholy interest. About nine o'clock in the morning, she took a hay-raik over her shoulder, and went down to a meadow at the east end of the loch, to coil a part of her father's hay, her father and brother engaging to join her about noon, when they came from the sheep-fold. As soon as old Andrew came home, his wife and he, as was natural, instantly began to converse on the events of the preceding night; and in the course of their conversation, Andrew said, "Gudeness be about us, Jean, was not yon an awfu' speech o' our bairn's to young Jock Allanson last night?"

"Ay, it was a downsetter, gudeman, and spoken like a good Christian lass."

"I'm no sae sure o' that, Jean Linton. My good woman, Jean Linton, I'm no sae sure o' that. Yon speech has gi'en me a great deal o' trouble o' heart; for 'ye ken, an take my life,—ay, an take your life, Jean,

—name o' us can tell whether it was in the Almighty's name, or the devil's, that she discharged her lover."

"O fy, Andrew, how can ye say sae? How can ye doubt that it was in the Almighty's name?"

"Couldna she have said sae then, and that wad hae put it beyond a' doubt? And that wad hae been the natural way too; but instead of that, she says, 'I pray you, in the name of him whose law you have transgressed, to depart out o' my sight.' I confess I'm terrified when I think about yon speech, Jean Linton. Didna she say, too, that 'her sufferings had been beyond what flesh and blood could have endured?' What was she but flesh and blood? Didna that remark infer that she was something mair than a mortal creature? Jean Linton, Jean Linton! what will you say, if it should turn out that our daughter is drowned, and that yon was the fairy we had in the house a' the night and this morning?"

"O haud your tongue, Andrew Burnet, and dinna make my heart cauld within me. We hae aye trusted in the Lord yet, and he has never forsaken us, nor will he yet gie the Wicked One power ower us or ours."

"Ye say very weel, Jean, and we maun e'en hope for the best," quoth old Andrew; and away he went, accompanied by his son Alexander, to assist their beloved Mary on the meadow.

No sooner had Andrew set his head over the bents,

and come in view of the meadow, than he said to his son, "I wish Jock Allanson maunna hae been east-the-loch fishing for geds the day, for I think my Mary has made very little progress in the meadow."

"She's ower muckle ta'en up about other things this while, to mind her wark," said Alexander: "I wadna wonder, father, if that lassie gangs a black gate yet."

Andrew uttered a long and a deep sigh, that seemed to ruffle the very fountains of life, and, without speaking another word, walked on to the hay field. It was three hours since Mary had left home, and she ought at least to have put up a dozen coils of hay each hour. But, in place of that, she had put up only seven altogether, and the last was unfinished. Her own hay-rick, that had an M and a B neatly cut on the head of it, was leaning on the unfinished coil, and Mary was wanting. Her brother, thinking she had hid herself from them in sport, ran from one coil to another, calling her many bad names, playfully; but, after he had turned them all up, and several deep swathes besides, she was not to be found. This young man, who slept in the byre, knew nothing of the events of the foregoing night, the old people and Allanson having mutually engaged to keep them a profound secret, and he had therefore less reason than his father to be seriously alarmed. When they began to work at the hay, Andrew could work none; he looked this way and that way, but in no way could

he see Mary approaching: so he put on his coat, and went away home, to pour his sorrows into the bosom of his wife; and in the meantime, he desired his son to run to all the neighbouring farming-houses and cots, every one, and make inquiries if any body had seen Mary.

When Andrew went home and informed his wife that their darling was missing, the grief and astonishment of the aged couple knew no bounds. They sat down, and wept together, and declared, over and over, that this act of Providence was too strange for them, and too high to be understood. Jean besought her husband to kneel instantly, and pray urgently to God to restore their child to them; but he declined it, on account of the wrong frame of his mind, for he declared, that his rage against John Allanson was so extreme, as to unfit him for approaching the throne of his Maker. "But if the prodigal refuses to listen to the entreaties of an injured parent," added he, "he shall feel the weight of an injured father's arm."

Andrew went straight away to Inverlawn, though without the least hope of finding young Allanson at home; but, on reaching the place, to his amazement, he found the young man lying ill of a burning fever, raving incessantly of witches, spirits, and Mary Burnet. To such a height had his frenzy arrived, that when Andrew went there, it required three men to hold him in

the bed. Both his parents testified their opinions openly, that their son was bewitched, or possessed of a demon, and the whole family was thrown into the greatest consternation. The good old shepherd, finding enough of grief there already, was obliged to confine his to his own bosom, and return disconsolate to his little family circle, in which there was a woful blank that night.

His son returned also from a fruitless search. No one had seen any traces of his sister, but an old crazy woman, at a place called Oxcleuch, said that she had seen her go by in a grand chariot with young Jock Alanson, toward the Birkhill Path, and by that time they were at the Cross of Dumgree. The young man said, he asked her what sort of a chariot it was, as there was never such a thing in that country as a chariot, nor yet a road for one. But she replied that he was widely mistaken, for that a great number of chariots sometimes passed that way, though never any of them returned. These words appearing to be merely the ravings of superannuation, they were not regarded; but when no other traces of Mary could be found, old Andrew went up to consult this crazy dame once more, but he was not able to bring any such thing to her recollection. She spoke only in parables, which to him were incomprehensible.

Bonny Mary Burnet was lost. She left her father's

house at nine o'clock on a Wednesday morning, the 17th of September, neatly dressed in a white jerkin and green bonnet, with her hay-raik over her shoulder; and that was the last sight she was doomed ever to see of her native cottage. She seemed to have had some presentiment of this, as appeared from her demeanour that morning before she left it. Mary Burnet of Kirkstyle was lost, and great was the sensation produced over the whole country by the mysterious event. There was a long hallel extant at one period on the melancholy catastrophe, which was supposed to have been composed by the chaplain of St Mary's; but I have only heard tell of it, without ever hearing it sung or recited. Many of the verses concluded thus:—

“ But Bonny Mary Burnet
We will never see again.”

The story soon got abroad, with all its horrid circumstances, (and there is little doubt that it was grievously exaggerated,) and there was no obloquy that was not thrown on the survivor, who certainly in some degree deserved it, for, instead of growing better, he grew ten times more wicked than he was before. In one thing the whole country agreed, that it had been the real Mary Burnet who was drowned in the loch, and that the being which was found in her bed, lying weeping and complaining of suffering, and which vanished

the next day, had been a fairy, an evil spirit, or a changeling of some sort, for that it never spoke save once, and that in a mysterious manner ; nor did it partake of any food with the rest of the family. Her father and mother knew not what to say or what to think, but they wandered through this weary world like people wandering in a dream. Every thing that belonged to Mary Burnet was kept by her parents as the most sacred relics, and many a tear did her aged mother shed over them. Every article of her dress brought the once comely wearer to mind. Andrew often said, " That to have lost the darling child of their old age in any way would have been a great trial, but to lose her in the way that they had done, was really mair than human frailty could endure."

Many a weary day did he walk by the shores of the loch, looking eagerly for some vestige of her garments, and though he trembled at every appearance, yet did he continue to search on. He had a number of small bones collected, that had belonged to lambs and other minor animals, and, haply, some of them to fishes, from a fond supposition that they might once have formed joints of her toes or fingers. These he kept concealed in a little bag, in order, as he said, " to let the doctors see them." But no relic, besides these, could he ever discover of Mary's body.

Young Allanson recovered from his raging fever

scarcely in the manner of other men, for he recovered all at once, after a few days raving and madness. Mary Burnet, it appeared, was by him no more remembered. He grew ten times more wicked than before, and hesitated at no means of accomplishing his unhallowed purposes. The devout shepherds and cottagers around detested him; and, both in their families and in the wild, when there was no ear to hear but that of Heaven, they prayed protection from his devices; as if he had been the Wicked One; and they all prophesied that he would make a bad end.

One fine day about the middle of October, when the days begin to get very short, and the nights long and dark, on a Friday morning, the next year but one after Mary Burnet was lost, a memorable day in the fairy annals, John Allanson, younger of Inverlawn, went to a great hiring fair at a village called Moffat in Annandale, in order to hire a housemaid. His character was so notorious, that not one young woman in the district would serve in his father's house; so away he went to the fair, at Moffat, to hire the prettiest and loveliest girl he could there find, with the intention of ruining her as soon as she came home. This is no supposititious accusation, for he acknowledged his plan to Mr David Welch of Cariferan, who rode down to the market with him, and seemed to boast of it, and dwell on it with delight. But the maidens of Annandale had

a guardian angel in the fair that day, of which neither he nor they were aware.

Allanson looked through the hiring market, and through the hiring market, and at length fixed on one young woman, which indeed was not difficult to do, for there was no such form there for elegance and beauty. Mr Welch stood still and eyed him. He took the beauty aside. She was clothed in green, and as lovely as a new-blown rose.

"Are you to hire, pretty maiden?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you hire with me?"

"I care not though I do. But if I hire with you, it must be for the long term."

"Certainly. The longer the better. What are your wages to be?"

"You know, if I hire, I must be paid in kind. I must have the first living creature that I see about Inverlawn to myself."

"I wish it may be me, then. But what do you know about Inverlawn?"

"I think I *should* know about it."

"Bless me! I know the face as well as I know my own, and better. But the name has somehow escaped me. Pray, may I ask your name?"

"Hush! hush!" said she solemnly, and holding up

her hand at the same time ; " Hush, hush, you had better say nothing about that here."

" I am in utter amazement !" he exclaimed. " What is the meaning of this ? I conjure you to tell me your name ?"

" It is Mary Burnet," said she, in a soft whisper ; and at the same time she let down a green veil over her face.

If Allanson's death-warrant had been announced to him at that moment, it could not have deprived him so completely of sense and motion. His visage changed into that of a corpse, his jaws fell down, and his eyes became glazed, so as apparently to throw no reflection inwardly. Mr Welch, who had kept his eye steadily on them all the while, perceived his comrade's dilemma, and went up to him. " Allanson ?—Mr Allanson ? What is the matter with you, man ?" said he. " Why, the girl has bewitched you, and turned you into a statue !"

Allanson made some sound in his throat, as if attempting to speak, but his tongue refused its office, and he only jabbered. Mr Welch, conceiving that he was seized with some fit, or about to faint, supported him into the Johnston Arms ; but he either could not, or would not, grant him any explanation. Welch being, however, resolved to see the maiden in green once more, persuaded Allanson, after causing him to drink a good deal, to go out into the hiring-market again, in search

of her. They ranged the market through and through, but the maiden in green was gone, and not to be found. She had vanished in the crowd the moment she divulged her name, and even though Welch had his eye fixed on her, he could not discover which way she went. Allanson appeared to be in a kind of stupor as well as terror, but when he found that she had left the market, he began to recover himself, and to look out again for the top of the market.

He soon found one more beautiful than the last. She was like a sylph, clothed in robes of pure snowy white, with green ribbons. Again he pointed this new flower out to Mr David Welch, who declared that such a perfect model of beauty he had never in his life seen. Allanson, being resolved to have this one at any wages, took her aside, and put the usual question: "Do you wish to hire, pretty maiden?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you hire with me?"

"I care not though I do."

"What, then, are your wages to be? Come—say? And be reasonable; I am determined not to part with you for a trifle."

"My wages must be in kind; I work on no other conditions.—Pray, how are all the good people about Inverlawn?"

Allanson's breath began to cut, and a chillness to

creep through his whole frame, and he answered, with a faltering tongue,—"I think you—must—rather—ordinary way."

"And your aged neighbours," repeated she, "are they still alive and well?"

"I—I—I think they are," said he, pausing for a moment. "But I am at a loss to know where I am mistaken as for these kind recollections."

"What," said she, "have you so soon forgot Mary Burnet of Kirkcaldy?"

Allanson started as if a bullet had gone through his heart. The lovely cygnet-like form glided now he moved, and left the astounded libertine once more standing like a rigid statue, until aroused by his friend, Mr. Welch. He tried a third fair one, and got the same answers, and the same name given. Indeed, the first time ever I heard the tale, it bore that he tried seven, who all turned out to be Mary Burnets of Kirkcaldy; but I think it unlikely that he would try so many, as he must long ere that time have been sensible that he laboured under some power of enchantment. However, when nothing else would do, he helped himself to a good proportion of strong drink. While he was thus engaged, a phenomenon of beauty and grandeur came into the fair, that caught the sole attention of all present. This was a lovely dame, riding in a gilded chariot, with two liverymen before, and two behind,

clothed in green and gold ; and never sure was there so splendid a meteor seen in a Moffat fair. The word instantly circulated in the market, that this was the Lady Elizabeth Douglas, eldest daughter to the Earl of Morton, who then sojourned at Auchincastle, in the vicinity of Moffat, and which lady at that time was celebrated as a great beauty all over Scotland. She was afterwards Lady Keith ; and the mention of this name in the tale, as it were by mere accident, fixes the era of it in the reign of James the Fourth, at the very time that fairies, brownies, and witches, were at the rifest in Scotland.

Every one in the market believed the lady to be the daughter of the Earl of Morton ; and when she came to the Johnston Arms, a gentleman in green came out bareheaded, and received her out of the carriage. All the crowd gazed at such unparalleled beauty and grandeur, but none was half so much overcome as Allison. He had never conceived aught half so lovely either in earth, or heaven, or fairyland ; and while he stood in a burning fever of admiration, think of his astonishment, and the astonishment of the countless crowd that looked on, when this brilliant and matchless beauty beckoned him towards her ! He could not believe his senses, but looked this way and that to see how others regarded the affair ; but she beckoned him a second time, with such a winning courtesy and smile,

that immediately he pulled off his beaver cap and hasted up to her ; and without more ado she gave him her arm, and the two walked into the hostel.

Allanson conceived that he was thus distinguished by Lady Elizabeth Douglas, the flower of the land, and so did all the people of the market ; and greatly they wondered who the young farmer could be that was thus particularly favoured ; for it ought to have been mentioned that he had not one personal acquaintance in the fair save Mr David Welch of Cariferan. The first thing the lady did was to inquire kindly after his health. Allanson thanked her ladyship with all the courtesy he was master of ; and being by this time persuaded that she was in love with him, he became as light as if treading on the air. She next inquired after his father and mother.—Oho ! thought he to himself, poor creature, she is terribly in for it ! but her love shall not be thrown away upon a backward or ungrateful object.—He answered her with great politeness, and at length began to talk of her noble father and young Lord William, but she cut him short by asking if he did not recognise her.

“ Oh, yes ! He knew who her ladyship was, and remembered that he had seen her comely face often before, although he could not, at that particular moment, recall to his memory the precise time or places of their meeting.”

She next asked for his old neighbours of Kirkstyle, and if they were still in life and health !

Allanson felt as if his heart were a piece of ice. A chillness spread over his whole frame ; he sank back on a seat, and remained motionless ; but the beautiful and adorable creature soothed him with kind words, till he again gathered courage to speak.

"What !" said he ; "and has it been your own lovely self who has been playing tricks on me this whole day ?"

"A first love is not easily extinguished, Mr Allanson," said she. "You may guess from my appearance, that I have been fortunate in life ; but, for all that, my first love for you has continued the same, unaltered and unchanged, and you must forgive the little freedoms I used to-day to try your affections, and the effects my appearance would have on you."

"It argues something for my good taste, however, that I never pitched on any face for beauty to-day but your own," said he. "But now that we have met once more, we shall not so easily part again. I will devote the rest of my life to you, only let me know the place of your abode."

"It is hard by," said she, "only a very little space from this ; and happy, happy, would I be to see you there to-night, were it proper or convenient. But my lord is at present from home, and in a distant country."

... "I should not conceive that any particular hindrance to my visit," said he.

With great apparent reluctance she at length consented to admit of his visit, and offered to leave one of her gentlemen, whom she could trust, to be his conductor; but this he positively refused. It was his desire, he said, that no eye of man should see him enter or leave her happy dwelling. She said he was a self-willed man, but should have his own way; and after giving him such directions as would infallibly lead him to her mansion, she mounted her chariot and was driven away.

Allanson was uplifted above every sublunary concern. Seeking out his friend, David Welch, he imparted to him his extraordinary good fortune, but he did not tell him that she was not the Lady Elizabeth Douglas. Welch insisted on accompanying him on the way, and refused to turn back till he came to the very point of the road next to the lady's splendid mansion; and in spite of all that Allanson could say, Welch remained there till he saw his comrade enter the court gate, which glowed with lights as innumerable as the stars of the firmament.

Allanson had promised to his father and mother to be home on the morning after the fair to breakfast. He came not either that day or the next; and the third day the old man mounted his white pony, and rode away towards Moffat in search of his son. He called at Ca-

riferan on his way, and made inquiries at Mr Welch. The latter manifested some astonishment that the young man had not returned; nevertheless he assured his father of his safety, and desired him to return home, and then with reluctance confessed that the young man was engaged in an amour with the Earl of Morton's beautiful daughter; that he had gone to the castle by appointment, and that he, David Welch, had accompanied him to the gate, and seen him enter, and it was apparent that his reception had been a kind one, since he had tarried so long.

Mr Welch, seeing the old man greatly distressed, was persuaded to accompany him on his journey, as the last who had seen his son, and seen him enter the castle. On reaching Moffat they found his steed standing at the hostel, whither it had returned on the night of the fair, before the company broke up; but the owner had not been heard of since seen in company with Lady Elizabeth Douglas. The old man set out for Auchincastle, taking Mr David Welch along with him; but long ere they reached the place, Mr Welch assured him he would not find his son there, as it was nearly in a different direction that they rode on the evening of the fair. However, to the castle they went, and were admitted to the Earl, who, after hearing the old man's tale, seemed to consider him in a state of derangement. He sent for his daughter Elizabeth, and questioned her concern-

ing her meeting with the son of the old respectable countryman—of her appointment with him on the night of the preceding Friday, and concluded by saying he hoped she had him still in some safe concealment about the castle.

The lady, hearing her father talk in this manner, and seeing the serious and dejected looks of the old man, knew not what to say, and asked an explanation. But Mr Welch put a stop to it by declaring to old Allanson that the Lady Elizabeth was not the lady with whom his son made the appointment, for he had seen her, and would engage to know her again among ten thousand; nor was that the castle towards which he had accompanied his son, nor any thing like it. "But go with me," continued he, "and, though I am a stranger in this district, I think I can take you to the very place."

They set out again; and Mr Welch traced the road from Moffat, by which young Allanson and he had gone, until, after travelling several miles, they came to a place where a road strack off to the right at an angle. "Now I know we are right," said Welch; "for here we stopped, and your son intreated me to return, which I refused, and accompanied him to yon large tree, and a little way beyond it, from whence I saw him received in at the splendid gate. We shall be in sight of the mansion in three minutes."

They passed on to the tree, and a space beyond it;

but then Mr Welch lost the use of his speech, as he perceived that there was neither palace nor gate there, but a tremendous gulf, fifty fathoms deep, and a dark stream foaming and boiling below.

"How is this?" said old Allanson. "There is neither mansion nor habitation of man here!"

Welch's tongue for a long time refused its office, and he stood like a statue, gazing on the altered and awful scene. "He only, who made the spirits of men," said he, at last, "and all the spirits that sojourn in the earth and air, can tell how this is. We are wandering in a world of enchantment, and have been influenced by some agencies above human nature, or without its pale; for here of a certainty did I take leave of your son—and there, in that direction, and apparently either on the verge of that gulf, or the space above it, did I see him received in at the court gate of a mansion, splendid beyond all conception. How can human comprehension make any thing of this?"

They went forward to the verge, Mr Welch leading the way to the very spot on which he saw the gate opened, and there they found marks where a horse had been plunging. Its feet had been over the brink, but it seemed to have recovered itself, and deep, deep down, and far within, lay the mangled corpse of John Allanson; and in this manner, mysterious beyond all example, terminated the career of that wicked and flagitious

young man.—What a beautiful moral may be extracted from this fairy tale!

But among all these turnings and windings, there is no account given, you will say, of the fate of Mary Burnet; for this last appearance of hers at Moffat seems to have been altogether a phantom or illusion. Gentle and kind reader, I can give you no account of the fate of that maiden; for though the ancient fairy tale proceeds, it seems to me to involve her fate in ten times more mystery than what we have hitherto seen of it.

The yearly return of the day on which Mary was lost, was observed as a day of mourning by her aged and disconsolate parents,—a day of sorrow, of fasting, and humiliation. Seven years came and passed away, and the seventh returning day of fasting and prayer was at hand. On the evening previous to it, old Andrew was moving along the sands of the loch, still looking for some relic of his beloved Mary, when he was aware of a little shrivelled old man, who came posting towards him. The creature was not above five spans in height, and had a face scarcely like that of a human creature; but he was, nevertheless, civil in his deportment, and sensible in speech. He bade Andrew a good evening, and asked him what he was looking for. Andrew answered, that he was looking for that which he should never find.

“Pray, what is your name, ancient shepherd?” said

the stranger; "for methinks I should know something of you, and perhaps have a commission to you."

"Alas! why should you ask after my name?" said Andrew. "My name is now nothing to any one."

"Had not you once a beautiful daughter, named Mary?" said the stranger.

"It is a heart-rending question, man," said Andrew; "but certes, I had once a beloved daughter named Mary."

"What became of her?" asked the stranger.

Andrew shook his head, turned round, and began to move away; it was a theme that his heart could not brook. He sauntered along the loch sands, his dim eye scanning every white pebble as he passed along. There was a hopelessness in his stooping form, his gait, his eye, his features,—in every step that he took there was a hopeless apathy. The dwarf followed him, and began to expostulate with him. "Old man, I see you are pining under some real or fancied affliction," said he. "But in continuing to do so, you are neither acting according to the dictates of reason nor true religion. What is man that he should fret, or the son of man that he should repine, under the chastening hand of his Maker?"

"I am far frae justifying mysell," returned Andrew, surveying his shrivelled monitor with some degree of astonishment. "But there are some feelings that nei-

that reason nor religion can o'ermaster; and there are some that a parent may cherish without sin."

"I deny the position," said the stranger, "taken either absolutely or relatively. All repining under the Supreme decree is laden with unrighteousness. But, subtleties aside, I ask you, as I did before, What became of your daughter?"

"Ask the Father of her spirit, and the framer of her body," said Andrew, solemnly; "ask Him into whose hands I committed her from childhood. He alone knows what became of her, but I do not."

"How long is it since you lost her?"

"It is seven years to-morrow."

"Ay! you remember the time well. And have you mourned for her all that while?"

"Yes; and I will go down to the grave mourning for my only daughter, the child of my age, and of all my affection. O, thou unearthly-looking moniter, knowest thou aught of my darling child? for if thou dost, thou wilt know that she was not like other women. There was a simplicity and a purity about my Mary, that was hardly consistent with our frail nature."

"Wouldst thou like to see her again?" said the dwarf.

Andrew turned round, his whole frame shaking as with a palsy, and gazed on the audacious imp. "See

her again, creature!" cried he vehemently—"Would I like to see her again, say'st thou?"

"I said so," said the dwarf, "and I say farther, Dost thou know this token? Look, and see if thou dost?"

Andrew took the token, and looked at it, then at the shrivelled stranger, and then at the token again; and at length he burst into tears, and wept aloud; but they were tears of joy, and his weeping seemed to have some breathings of laughter intermingled in it. And still as he kissed the token, he called out in broken and convulsive sentences,—“Yes, auld body, I *do* know it!—I *do* know it!—I *do* know it! It is indeed the same golden Edward, with three holes in it, with which I presented my Mary on her birth-day, in her eighteenth year, to buy a new suit for the holidays. But when she took it she said—ay, I mind weel what my bonny woman said,—‘It is sae bonny and sae kenspeckle,’ said she, ‘that I think I’ll keep it for the sake of the giver.’ O dear, dear!—Blessed little creature, tell me how she is, and where she is? Is she living, or is she dead?”

“She is living, and in good health,” said the dwarf; “and better, and braver, and happier, and lovelier than ever; and if you make haste, you will see her and her family at Moffat to-morrow afternoon. They are to pass there on a journey, but it is an express one, and I am sent to you with that token, to inform you of the circumstance, that you may have it in your power to

see and embrace your beloved daughter once before you die."

"And am I to meet my Mary at Moffat? Come away, little, dear, welcome body, thou blessed of heaven, come away, and taste of an auld shepherd's best cheer, and I'll gang foot for foot with you to Moffat, and my auld wife shall gang foot for foot with us too. I tell you, little, blessed, and welcome crile, come along with me."

"I may not tarry to enter your house, or taste of your cheer, good shepherd," said the being. "May plenty still be within your walls, and a thankful heart to enjoy it! But my directions are neither to taste meat nor drink in this country, but to haste back to her that sent me. Go—haste, and make ready, for you have no time to lose."

"At what time will she be there?" cried Andrew, flinging the plaid from him to run home with the tidings.

"Precisely when the shadow of the Holy Cross falls due east," cried the dwarf; and turning round, he hastened on his way.

When old Jean Linton saw her husband coming hobbling and running home without his plaid, and having his doublet flying wide open, she had no doubt that he had lost his wits; and, full of anxiety, she met him at the side of the kail-yard. "Gudeness preserve us a'

in our right senses, Andrew Burnet, what's the matter wi' you, Andrew Burnet?"

"Stand out o' my gate, wife, for, d'ye see, I'm rather in a haste, Jean Linton."

"I see that indeed, gudeman; but stand still, and tell me what has putten you in sic a haste. Ir ye dementit?"

"Na, na; gudewife, Jean Linton, I'm no dementit—I'm only gaun away till Moffat."

"O, gudeness pity the poor auld body! How can ye gang to Moffat, man? Or what have ye to do at Moffat? Dinna ye mind that the morn is the day o' our solemnity?"

"Haud out o' my gate, auld wife, and dinna speak o' solemnities to me. I'll keep it at Moffat the morn. Ay, gudewife, and ye shall keep it at Moffat, too. What d'ye think o' that, woman? Too-who! ye dinna ken the metal that's in an auld body till it be tried."

"Andrew—Andrew Burnet!"

"Get away wi' your frightened looks, woman; and haste ye, gang and fling me out my Sabbath-day claes. And, Jean Linton, my woman, d'ye hear, gang and pit on your bridal gown, and your silk hood, for ye maun be at Moffat the morn too; and it is mair nor time we were away. Dinna look sae surprised, woman, till I tell ye, that our ain Mary is to meet us at Moffat the morn."

"O, Andrew ! dinna sport wi' the feelings of an auld forsaken heart !"

"Gude forbid, my auld wife, that I should ever sport wi' feeling o' yours," cried Andrew, bursting into tears ; "they are a' as saacred to me as breathings frae the Throne o' Grace. But it is true that I tell ye ; our dear bairn is to meet us at Moffat the morn, wi' a son in every hand ; and we maun e'en gang and see her since again, and kiss her and bless her afore we dee."

The tears now rushed from the old woman's eyes like fountains, and dropped from her sorrow-worn cheeks to the earth, and then, as with a spontaneous movement, she threw her skirt over her head, kneeled down at her husband's feet, and poured out her soul in thanksgiving to her Maker. She then rose up, quite deprived of her senses through joy, and ran crouching away on the road towards Moffat, as if hasting beyond her power to be at it. But Andrew brought her back ; and they prepared themselves for their journey.

Kirkstyle being twenty miles from Moffat, they set out on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 16th of September ; slept that night at a place called Turnberry Sheil, and were in Moffat next day by noon. Wearisome was the remainder of the day to that aged couple ; they wandered about conjecturing by what road their daughter would come, and how she would come attended.

"I have made up my mind on baith these matters," said Andrew; "at first I thought it was likely that she would come out of the east, because a' our blessings come frae that airt; but finding now that would be o'er near to the very road we hae come oursells, I now take it for granted she'll come frae the south; and I just think I see her leading a bonny boy in every hand, and a servant lass carrying a bit bundle ahint her."

The two now walked out on all the southern roads, in hopes to meet their Mary, but always returned to watch the shadow of the Holy Cross; and, by the time it fell due east, they could do nothing but stand in the middle of the street, and look round them in all directions. At length, about half a mile out on the Dumfries road, they perceived a poor beggar woman approaching with two children following close to her, and another beggar a good way behind. Their eyes were instantly riveted on these objects; for Andrew thought he perceived his friend the dwarf in the one that was behind; and now all other earthly objects were to them nothing, save these approaching beggars. At that moment a gilded chariot entered the village from the south, and drove by them at full speed, having two livery-men before, and two behind, clothed in green and gold. "Ach-wow! the vanity of worldly graundeur!" ejaculated Andrew, as the splendid vehicle went thundering by; but neither he nor his wife

deigned to look at it farther, their whole attention being fixed on the group of beggars. "Ay, it is just my woman," said Andrew, "it is just hersell; I ken her gang yet, sair pressed down wi' poortith although she be. But I dinna care how poor she be, for baith her and hers sall be welcome to my fireside as lang as I hae ane."

While their eyes were thus strained, and their hearts melting with tenderness and pity, Andrew felt something embracing his knees, and, on looking down, there was his Mary, blooming in splendour and beauty, kneeling at his feet. Andrew uttered a loud hysterical scream of joy, and clasped her to his bosom; and old Jean Linton stood trembling, with her arms spread, but durst not close them on so splendid a creature, till her daughter first enfolded her in a fond embrace, and then she hung upon her and wept. It was a wonderful event—a restoration without a parallel. They indeed beheld their Mary, their long-lost darling; they held her in their embraces, believed in her identity, and were satisfied. Satisfied, did I say? They were happy beyond the lot of mortals. She had just alighted from her chariot; and, perceiving her aged parents standing together, she ran and kneeled at their feet. They now retired into the hostel, where Mary presented her two sons to her father and mother. They spent the evening in every social endearment; and

Mary loaded the good old couple with rich presents, watched over them till midnight, when they both fell into a deep and happy sleep, and then she remounted her chariot, and was driven away. If she was any more seen in Scotland, I never heard of it; but her parents rejoiced in the thoughts of her happiness till the day of their death.

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THE BROWNIE OF THE BLACK HAGGS.

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THE BROWNIE OF THE BLACK HAGGS. CHAPTER X.

THE BROWNIE OF THE BLACK HAGGS.

WHEN the Sprots were Lairds of Wheelhope, which is now a long time ago, there was one of the ladies who was very badly spoken of in the country. People did not just openly assert that Lady Wheelhope (for every landward laird's wife was then styled Lady) was a witch, but every one had an aversion even at hearing her named; and when by chance she happened to be mentioned, old men would shake their heads and say, "Ah! let us alane o' her! The less ye meddle wi' her the better." Old wives would give over spinning, and, as a pretence for hearing what might be said about her, poke in the fire with the tongs, cocking up their ears all the while; and then, after some meaning coughs, hems, and haws, would haply say, "Hech-wow, sirs! An a' be true that's said!" or something equally wise and decisive.

In short, Lady Wheelhope was accounted a very bad woman. She was an inexorable tyrant in her family,

quarrelled with her servants, often cursing them, striking them, and turning them away; especially if they were religious, for she could not endure people of that character, but charged them with every thing bad. Whenever she found out that any of the servant men of the Laird's establishment were religious, she gave them up to the military, and got them shot; and several girls that were regular in their devotions, she was supposed to have got rid of by poison. She was certainly a wicked woman, else many good people were mistaken in her character; and the poor persecuted Covenanters were obliged to unite in their prayers against her.

As for the Laird, he was a big, dun-faced, pluffy body, that cared neither for good nor evil, and did not well know the one from the other. He laughed at his lady's tantrums and barley-hoods; and the greater the rage that she got into, the Laird thought it the better sport. One day, when two maid-servants came running to him, in great agitation, and told him that his lady had felled one of their companions, the Laird laughed heartily, and said he did not doubt it.

"Why, sir, how can you laugh?" said they. "The poor girl is killed."

"Very likely, very likely," said the Laird. "Well, it will teach her to take care who she angers again."

"And, sir, your lady will be hanged."

“Very likely; well, it will teach her how to strike so rashly again—Ha, ha, ha! Will it not, Jessy?”

But when this same Jessy died suddenly one morning, the Laird was greatly confounded, and seemed dimly to comprehend that there had been unfair play going. There was little doubt that she was taken off by poison; but whether the Lady did it through jealousy or not, was never divulged; but it greatly bamboozled and astonished the poor Laird, for his nerves failed him, and his whole frame became paralytic. He seems to have been exactly in the same state of mind with a colley that I once had. He was extremely fond of the gun as long as I did not kill any thing with it, (there being no game laws in Ettrick Forest in those days,) and he got a grand chase after the hares when I missed them. But there was one day that I chanced for a marvel to shoot one dead, a few paces before his nose. I'll never forget the astonishment that the poor beast manifested. He stared one while at the gun, and another while at the dead hare, and seemed to be drawing the conclusion, that if the case stood thus, there was no creature sure of its life. Finally, he took his tail between his legs, and ran away home, and never would face a gun all his life again.

So was it precisely with Laird Sprot of Wheelhope. As long as his lady's wrath produced only noise and uproar among the servants, he thought it fine sport; but

when he saw what he believed the dreadful effects of it, he became like a barrel organ out of tune, and could only discourse one note, which he did to every one he met. "I wish she mayna hae gotten something she had been the waur of." This note he repeated early and late, night and day, sleeping and waking, alone and in company, from the moment that Jessy died till she was buried; and on going to the churchyard as chief mourner, he whispered it to her relatives by the way. When they came to the grave, he took his stand at the head, nor would he give place to the girl's father; but there he stood, like a huge post, as though he neither saw nor heard; and when he had lowered her head into the grave, and dropped the cord, he slowly lifted his hat with one hand, wiped his dim eyes with the back of the other, and said, in a deep tremulous tone, "Poor lassie! I wish she didna get something she had been the waur of."

This death made a great noise among the common people; but there was little protection for the life of the subject in those days; and provided a man or woman was a real Anti-Covenanter, they might kill a good many without being quarrelled for it. So there was no one to take cognizance of the circumstances relating to the death of poor Jessy.

After this, the Lady walked softly for the space of two or three years. She saw that she had rendered her-

self odious, and had entirely lost her husband's countenance, which she liked worst of all. But the evil propensity could not be overcome; and a poor boy, whom the Laird, out of sheer compassion, had taken into his service, being found dead one morning, the country people could no longer be restrained; so they went in a body to the Sheriff, and insisted on an investigation. It was proved that she detested the boy, had often threatened him, and had given him brose and butter the afternoon before he died; but notwithstanding of all this, the cause was ultimately dismissed, and the pursuers fined.

No one can tell to what height of wickedness she might now have proceeded, had not a check of a very singular kind been laid upon her. Among the servants that came home at the next term, was one who called himself Merodach; and a strange person he was. He had the form of a boy, but the features of one a hundred years old, save that his eyes had a brilliancy and restlessness, which were very extraordinary, bearing a strong resemblance to the eyes of a well-known species of monkey. He was froward and perverse, and disregarded the pleasure or displeasure of any person; but he performed his work well, and with apparent ease. From the moment he entered the house, the Lady conceived a mortal antipathy against him, and besought the Laird to turn him away. But the Laird would not con-

sent; he never turned away any servant, and moreover he had hired this fellow for a trivial wage, and he neither wanted activity nor perseverance. The natural consequence of this refusal was, that the Lady instantly set herself to embitter Merodach's life as much as possible, in order to get early quit of a domestic every way so disagreeable. Her hatred of him was not like a common antipathy entertained by one human being against another,—she hated him as one might hate a toad or an adder; and his occupation of jotteryman (as the Laird termed his servant of all work) keeping him always about her hand, it must have proved highly annoying.

She scolded him, she raged at him; but he only mocked her wrath, and giggled and laughed at her, with the most provoking derision. She tried to fell him again and again, but never, with all her address, could she hit him; and never did she make a blow at him, that she did not repent it. She was heavy and unwieldy, and he as quick in his motions as a monkey; besides, he generally contrived that she should be in such an ungovernable rage, that when she flew at him, she hardly knew what she was doing. At one time she guided her blow towards him, and he at the same instant avoided it with such dexterity, that she knocked down the chief hind, or foresman; and then Merodach giggled so heartily, that, lifting the kitchen poker, she threw it at

him with a full design of knocking out his brains ; but the missile only broke every article of crockery on the kitchen daisier.

She then hastened to the Laird, crying bitterly, and telling him she would not suffer that wretch Merodach, as she called him, to stay another night in the family.

"Why, then, put him away, and trouble me no more about him," said the Laird.

"Put him away !" exclaimed she ; " I have already ordered him away a hundred times, and charged him never to let me see his horrible face again ; but he only grins, and answers with some intolerable piece of impertinence."

The pertinacity of the fellow amused the Laird ; his dim-eyes turned upwards into his head with delight ; he then looked two ways at once, turned round his back, and laughed till the tears ran down his dun cheeks ; but he could only articulate, " You're fitted now."

The Lady's agony of rage still increasing from this decision, she upbraided the Laird bitterly, and said he was not worthy the name of man, if he did not turn away that pestilence, after the way he had abused her.

"Why, Shusy, my dear, what has he done to you ?"

"What done to me ! has he not caused me to knock down John Thomson ? and I do not know if ever he will come to life again !"

"Have you felled your favourite John Thomson ?"

said the Laird, laughing more heartily than before; "you might have done a worse deed than that."

"And has he not broke every plate and dish on the whole dresser?" continued the Lady; "and for all this devastation, he only mocks at my displeasure,—absolutely mocks me,—and if you do not have him turned away, and hanged or shot for his deeds, you are not worthy the name of man."

"O alack! What a devastation among the cheena metal!" said the Laird; and calling on Merodach, he said, "Tell me, thou evil Merodach of Babylon, how thou dared'st knock down thy Lady's favourite servant, John Thomson?"

"Not I, your honour. It was my Lady herself, who got into such a furious rage at me, that she mistook her man, and felled Mr Thomson; and the good man's skull is fractured."

"That was very odd," said the Laird, chuckling; "I do not comprehend it. But then, what set you on smashing all my Lady's delft and cheena ware?—That was a most infamous and provoking action."

"It was she herself, your honour. Sorry would I be to break one dish belonging to the house. I take all the house servants to witness, that my Lady smashed all the dishes with a poker; and now lays the blame on me!"

The Laird turned his dim eyes on his lady, who was

trying with vexation and rage, and seemed meditating another personal attack on the culprit, which he did not at all appear to shun, but rather to court. She, however, vented her wrath in threatenings of the most deep and desperate revenge, the creature all the while assuring her that she would be foiled, and that in all her encounters and contests with him, she would uniformly come to the worst; he was resolved to do his duty, and there before his master he defied her.

The Laird thought more than he considered it prudent to reveal; he had little doubt that his wife would find some means of wreaking her vengeance on the object of her displeasure; and he shuddered when he recollected one who had taken "something that she had been the waur of."

In a word, the Lady of Wheelhope's inveterate malignity against this one object, was like the rod of Moses, that swallowed up the rest of the serpents. All her wicked and evil propensities seemed to be superseded, if not utterly absorbed by it. The rest of the family now lived in comparative peace and quietness; for early and late her malevolence was venting itself against the jotteryman, and against him alone. It was a delirium of hatred and vengeance, on which the whole bent and bias of her inclination was set. She could not stay from the creature's presence, or, in the intervals when absent from him, she spent her breath in

curse and execrations; and then, not able to rest, she ran again to seek him, her eyes gleaming with the anticipated delights of vengeance, while, ever and anon, all the ridicule and the harm redounded on herself.

Was it not strange that she could not get quit of this sole annoyance of her life? One would have thought she easily might. But by this time there was nothing farther from her wishes; she wanted vengeance, full, adequate, and delicious vengeance, on her audacious opponent. But he was a strange and terrible creature, and the means of retaliation constantly came, as it were, to his hand.

Bread and sweet milk was the only fare that Merodach cared for, and having bargained for that, he would not want it, though he often got it with a curse and with ill will. The Lady having, upon one occasion, intentionally kept back his wonted allowance for some days, on the Sabbath morning following, she set him down a bowl of rich sweet milk, well drugged with a deadly poison; and then she lingered in a little ante-room to watch the success of her grand plot, and prevent any other creature from tasting of the potion. Merodach came in, and the house-maid said to him, "There is your breakfast, creature."

"Oho! my Lady has been liberal this morning," said he; "but I am beforehand with her.—Here, little Missie, you seem very hungry to-day—take you my break-

fast." And with that he set the beverage down to the Lady's little favourite spaniel. It so happened that the Lady's only son came at that instant into the ante-room seeking her, and teasing his mamma about something, which withdrew her attention from the hall-table for a space. When she looked again, and saw Missie lapping up the sweet milk, she burst from her hiding-place like a fury, screaming as if her head had been on fire, kicked the remainder of its contents against the wall, and lifting Missie in her bosom, retreated hastily, crying all the way.

"Ha, ha, ha—I have you now!" cried Merodach, as she vanished from the hall.

Poor Missie died immediately, and very privately; indeed, she would have died and been buried, and never one have seen her, save her mistress, had not Merodach, by a luck that never failed him, looked over the wall of the flower garden, just as his lady was laying her favourite in a grave of her own digging. She, not perceiving her tormentor, plied on at her task, apostrophising the insensate little carcass,—“Ah! poor dear little creature, thou hast had a hard fortune, and hast drank of the bitter potion that was not intended for thee; but he shall drink it three times double for thy sake!”

“Is that little Missie?” said the eldrich voice of the jotteryman, close at the Lady's ear. She uttered a loud

uttered, and then moved on her knees. "Alack for poor
 "Hence" murmured the creature in a tone of mockery,
 "my heart is sorry for Hilda. What has befallen
 her—Hilda weeping and the sea dark?"

"Hence with thee, hence" cried the Lady; "what
 wilt thou dare to intrude on thy mistress's privacy?
 Thy tale is touching, yet it has the nature of women
 though spoken by thee."

"I am stronger than thou," said the creature, grinning
 with malignity. "I have thee now. I have thee now!
 And were I not to show my superiority over thee,
 which I do every hour, I should soon see thee strapped
 like a dumb ox to a wailing bench. What wilt thou
 say now?"

"I will cut thy throat, and if I die for it, will re-
 joice in the deed: a deed of charity to all that dwell
 on the face of the earth."

"I have warned thee before, damne, and I now warn
 thee again, that all thy mischief meditated against me
 will fall double on thine own head."

"I want none of your warning, fieshish cur. Hence
 with your elvish face, and take care of yourself."

It would be too disgusting and horrible to relate or
 read all the incidents that fell out between this unac-
 countable couple. Their enmity against each other
 had no end, and no mitigation; and scarcely a single
 day passed over on which the Lady's acts of malevo-

But Ingeatilly did not terminate finally for some intimate thing of her own. Scarcely was there a thing intimate or familiar, on which she was a value. left her, that was not destroyed; and yet scarcely one hour or minute could she remain absent from her tormentor and all the while, it seems, solely for the purpose of tormenting him. While all the rest of the establishment enjoyed peace and quietness from the fury of their tormented dame, matters still grew worse and worse between the fascinated pair. The Lady haunted the sternal, in the same manner as the raven haunts the eagle,—for a perpetual quarrel, though the former knew that in every encounter she is to come off the loser. Noises were heard on the stairs by night, and it was whispered among the servants, that the Lady had been seeking Merodach's chamber, on some horrible intent. Several of them would have sworn that they had seen her passing and repassing on the stair after midnight, when all was quiet; but then it was likewise well known, that Merodach slept with well-fastened doors, and a companion in another bed in the same room, whose bed, too, was nearest the door. Nobody cared much what became of the jotteryman, for he was an unsocial and disagreeable person; but some one told him what they had seen, and hinted a suspicion of the Lady's intent. But the creature only bit his upper lip,

winked with his eyes, and said, "She had better let that alone; she will be the first to rue that."

Not long after this, to the horror of the family and the whole country side, the Laird's only son was found murdered in his bed one morning, under circumstances that manifested the most fiendish cruelty and inhumanity on the part of his destroyer. As soon as the atrocious act was divulged, the Lady fell into convulsions, and lost her reason; and happy had it been for her had she never recovered the use of it, for there was blood upon her hand, which she took no care to conceal, and there was little doubt that it was the blood of her own innocent and beloved boy, the sole heir and hope of the family.

This blow deprived the Laird of all power of action; but the Lady had a brother, a man of the law, who came and instantly proceeded to an investigation of this unaccountable murder. Before the Sheriff arrived, the housekeeper took the Lady's brother aside, and told him he had better not go on with the scrutiny, for she was sure the crime would be brought home to her unfortunate mistress; and after examining into several corroborative circumstances, and viewing the state of the raving maniac, with the blood on her hand and arm, he made the investigation a very short one, declaring the domestics all exculpated.

The Laird attended his boy's funeral, and laid his

heard in the grave, but appeared exactly like a man walking in a trance, an automaton, without feelings or sensations; oftentimes gazing at the funeral procession, as at something he could not comprehend. And when the death-bell of the parish church fell a-tolling, as the corpse approached the kirk-stile, he cast a dim eye up towards the belfry, and said hastily, "What, what's that? Och ay, we're just in time, just in time." And often was he hammering over the name of "Evil Merodach, King of Babylon," to himself. He seemed to have some far-fetched conception that his unaccountable jotteryman was in some way connected with the death of his only son, and other lesser calamities, although the evidence in favour of Merodach's innocence was as usual quite decisive.

This grievous mistake of Lady Wheelhope can only be accounted for, by supposing her in a state of derangement, or rather under some evil influence, over which she had no control; and to a person in such a state, the mistake was not so very unnatural. The mansion-house of Wheelhope was old and irregular. The stair had four acute turns, and four landing-places, all the same. In the uppermost chamber slept the two domestics,—Merodach in the bed farthest in, and in the chamber immediately below that, which was exactly similar, slept the Young Laird and his tutor, the former in the bed farthest in; and thus, in the turmoil

of her wild and raging passions, her own hand made herself childless.

Merodach was expelled the family forthwith, but refused to accept of his wages, which the man of law pressed upon him, for fear of farther mischief; but he went away in apparent sullenness and discontent, no one knowing whither.

When his dismissal was announced to the Lady, who was watched day and night in her chamber, the news had such an effect on her, that her whole frame seemed electrified; the horrors of remorse vanished, and another passion, which I neither can comprehend nor define, took the sole possession of her distempered spirit. "He *must* not go!—He *shall* not go!" she exclaimed. "No, no, no—he shall not—he shall not—he shall not!" and then she instantly set herself about making ready to follow him, uttering all the while the most diabolical expressions, indicative of anticipated vengeance.—"Oh, could I but snap his nerves one by one, and birl among his vitals! Could I but slice his heart off piecemeal in small messes, and see his blood lopper, and bubble, and spin away in purple slays; and then to see him grin, and grin, and grin, and grin! Oh—oh—oh—How beautiful and grand a sight it would be to see him grin, and grin, and grin!" And in such a style would she run on for hours together.

She thought of nothing, she spake of nothing, but

the discarded jotteryman, whom most people now began to regard as a creature that was "not canny." They had seen him eat, and drink, and work, like other people; still he had that about him that was not like other men. He was a boy in form, and an antediluvian in feature. Some thought he was a mongrel, between a Jew and an ape; some a wizard, some a kelpie, or a fairy, but most of all, that he was really and truly a Brownie. What he was I do not know, and therefore will not pretend to say; but be that as it may, in spite of locks and keys, watching and waking, the Lady of Wheelhope soon made her escape, and eloped after him. The attendants, indeed, would have made oath that she was carried away by some invisible hand, for it was impossible, they said, that she could have escaped on foot like other people; and this edition of the story took in the country; but sensible people viewed the matter in another light.

As for instance, when Wattie Blythe, the Laird's old shepherd, came in from the hill one morning, his wife Bessie thus accosted him.—"His presence be about us, Wattie Blythe! have ye heard what has happened at the ha? Things are aye turning waur and waur there, and it looks like as if Providence had gi'en up our Laird's house to destruction. This grand estate maun now gang frae the Sprots; for it has finished them."

"Na, na, Bessie, it isna the estate that has finished the Sprots, but the Sprots that has finished the estate, and themselfs into the boot. They has been a wicked and degenerate race, and aye the langer the waur, till they has reached the utmost bounds o' earthly wickedness; and it's time the deil were looking after his ain."

"Ah, Wattie Blythe, ye never said a truer say. And that's just the very point where your story ends, and mine begins; for hasna the deil, or the fairies, or the brownies, ta'en away our Liddy bodily! and the hail country is running and riding in search o' her; and there is twenty hunder merks offered to the first that can find her, and bring her safe back. They has ta'en her away, skin and bane, body and soul, and a' Wattie!"

"Hech-wow! but that is awsome! And where is it thought they have ta'en her to, Bessie?"

"O, they has some guess at that frae her ain hints afore. It is thought they has carried her after that Satan o' a creature, wha wrought sae muckle wae about the house. It is for him they are a' looking, for they ken weel, that where they get the tane they will get the tither."

"Whew! Is that the gate o't, Bessie? Why, then, the awfu' story is neuther mair nor less than this, that the Liddy has made a 'lopement, as they ca't, and run away after a blackguard jotteryman. Hech-wow! wae's

me for human frailty ! But that's just the gate ! When aince the deil gets in the point o' his finger, he will soon have in his haill hand. Ay, he wants but a hair to make a tether of, ony day ! I hae seen her a braw sony lass ; but even then I feared she was devoted to destruction, for she aye mockit at religion, Bessie, and that's no a good mark of a young body. And she made a' its servants her enemies ; and think you these good men's prayers were a' to blaw away i' the wind, and be nae mair regarded ? Na, na, Bessie, my woman, take ye this mark haith o' our ain bairns and ither folk's—If ever ye see a young body that disregards the Sabbath, and makes a mock at the ordinances o' religion, ye will never see that body come to muckle good.—A braw hand our Leddy has made o' her gibes and jeers at religion, and her mockeries o' the poor persecuted hill-folk !—sunk down by degrees into the very dregs o' sin and misery ! run away after a scullion !”

“Fy, fy, Wattie, how can ye say sae ? It was weel kenn'd that she hatit him wi' a perfect and mortal hatred, and tried to make away wi' him mae ways nor ane.”

“Aha, Bessie ; but nipping and scarting is Scots folk's wooing ; and though it is but right that we suspend our judgments, there will naebody persuade me if she be found alang wi' the creature, but that she has

fan away after him in the natural way, on her two shanks, without help either frae fairy or brownie."

"I'll never believe sic a thing of any woman born, let be a leddy weel up in years."

"Od help ye, Bessie! ye dianna ken the stretch o' corrupt nature. The best o' us, when left to oursel's, are nae better than strayed sheep, that will never find the way back to their ain pastures; and of a' things made o' mortal flesh, a wicked woman is the warst."

"Alack-a-day! we get the blame o' muckle that we little deserve. But, Wattie, keep ye a geyan sharp look-out about the cleuchs and the caves o' our hope; for the Laddy kens them a' geyan weel; and gif the twenty hunder merks wad come our way, it might gang a waur gate. It wad tocher a' our bonny lasses."

"Ay, weel I wat, Bessie, that's nae lee. And now, when ye bring me amind o't, I'm sair mista'en if I didna hear a creature up in the Brockholes this morning, skirling as if something war cutting its throat. It gars a' the hairs stand on my head when I think it may ha' been our Laddy, and the droich of a creature murdering her. I took it for a battle of wulcats, and wished they might pu' out ane anither's thrapples; but when I think on it again, they war unco like some o' our Laddy's unearthly screams."

"His presence be about us, Wattie! Haste ye—pit

on your bonnet—tak' your staff in your hand, and gang and see what it is."

"Shame fa' me, if I daur gang, Bessie."

"Hout, Wattie, trust in the Lord."

"Aweel, sae I do. But ane's no to throw himsell ower a linn, and trust that the Lord will kep him in a blanket. And it's nae muckle safer for an auld stiff man like me to gang away out to a wild remote place, where there is ae body murdering another.—What is that I hear, Bessie? Haud the lang tongue o' you, and rin to the door, and see what noise that is."

Bessie ran to the door, but soon returned, with her mouth wide open, and her eyes set in her head.

"It is them, Wattie! it is them! His presence be about us! What will we do?"

"Them? whaten them?"

"Why, that blackguard creature, coming here, leading our Leddy by the hair o' the head, and yerking her wi' a stick. I am terrified out o' my wits. What will we do?"

"We'll see what they say," said Wattie, manifestly in as great terror as his wife; and by a natural impulse, or as a last resource, he opened the Bible, not knowing what he did, and then burried on his spectacles; but before he got two leaves turned over, the two entered,—a frightful-looking couple indeed. Mero-dach, with his old withered face, and ferret eyes, lead-

ing the Lady of Wheelhope by the long hair, which was mixed with grey, and whose face was all bloated with wounds and bruises, and having stripes of blood on her garments.

"How's this!—How's this, airs?" said Wattie Blythe.

"Close that book, and I will tell you, goodman," said Merodach.

"I can hear what you hae to say wi' the beuk open, air," said Wattie, turning over the leaves, pretending to look for some particular passage, but apparently not knowing what he was doing. "It is a shamefu' business this; but some will hae to answer for't. My Laddy, I am unco grieved to see you in sic a plight. Ye hae surely been dooms sair left to yoursell."

The Lady shook her head, uttered a feeble hollow laugh, and fixed her eyes on Merodach. But such a look! It almost frightened the simple aged couple out of their senses. It was not a look of love nor of hatred exclusively; neither was it of desire or disgust, but it was a combination of them all. It was such a look as one fiend would cast on another, in whose everlasting destruction he rejoiced. Wattie was glad to take his eyes from such countenances, and look into the Bible, that firm foundation of all his hopes and all his joy.

"I request that you will shut that book, air," said the horrible creature; "or if you do not, I will shut

it for you with a vengeance ;" and with that he seized it, and flung it against the wall. Bessie uttered a scream, and Wattie was quite paralysed ; and although he seemed disposed to run after his best friend, as he called it, the hellish looks of the Brownie interposed, and glued him to his seat.

"Hear what I have to say first," said the creature, "and then pore your fill on that precious book of yours. One concern at a time is enough. I came to do you a service. Here, take this cursed, wretched woman, whom you style your Lady, and deliver her up to the lawful authorities, to be restored to her husband and her place in society. She has followed one that hates her, and never said one kind word to her in his life ; and though I have beat her like a dog, still she clings to me, and will not depart, so enchanted is she with the laudable purpose of cutting my throat. Tell your master and her brother, that I am not to be burdened with their maniac. I have scourged—I have spurned and kicked her, afflicting her night and day, and yet from my side she will not depart. Take her. Claim the reward in full, and your fortune is made ; and so farewell !"

The creature went away, and the moment his back was turned, the Lady fell a-screaming and struggling, like one in an agony, and, in spite of all the old couple's exertions, she forced herself out of their hands, and ran

after the retreating Merodach. When he saw better would not be, he turned upon her, and, by one blow with his stick, struck her down; and, not content with that, continued to maltreat her in such a manner, as to all appearance would have killed twenty ordinary persons. The poor devoted dame could do nothing, but now and then utter a squeak like a half-worried cat, and writhe and grovel on the sward, till Wattie and his wife came up, and withheld her tormentor from further violence. He then bound her hands behind her back with a strong cord, and delivered her once more to the charge of the old couple, who contrived to hold her by that means, and take her home.

Wattie was ashamed to take her into the hall, but led her into one of the out-houses, whither he brought her brother to receive her. The man of the law was manifestly vexed at her reappearance, and scrupled not to testify his dissatisfaction; for when Wattie told him how the wretch had abused his sister, and that, had it not been for Bessie's interference and his own, the Lady would have been killed outright, he said, "Why, Walter, it is a great pity that he did *not* kill her outright. What good can her life now do to her, or of what value is her life to any creature living? After one has lived to disgrace all connected with them, the sooner they are taken off the better."

The man, however, paid old Walter down his two

thousand merks, a great fortune for one like him in those days; and not to dwell longer on this unnatural story, I shall only add, very shortly, that the Lady of Wheelhope soon made her escape once more, and flew, as if drawn by an irresistible charm, to her tormentor. Her friends looked no more after her; and the last time she was seen alive, it was following the uncouth creature up the water of Daur, weary, wounded, and lame, while he was all the way beating her, as a piece of excellent amusement. A few days after that, her body was found among some wild haggs, in a place called Crook-burn, by a party of the persecuted Covenanters that were in hiding there, some of the very men whom she had exerted herself to destroy, and who had been driven, like David of old, to pray for a curse and earthly punishment upon her. They buried her like a dog at the Yetts of Keppel, and rolled three huge stones upon her grave, which are lying there to this day. When they found her corpse, it was mangled and wounded in a most shocking manner, the fiendish creature having manifestly tormented her to death. He was never more seen or heard of in this kingdom, though all that country-side was kept in terror for him many years afterwards; and to this day, they will tell you of THE BROWNIE OF THE BLACK HAGGS, which title he seems to have acquired after his disappearance.

This story was told to me by an old man named

Adam Halliday, whose great-grandfather, Thomas Halliday, was one of those that found the body and buried it. It is many years since I heard it; but, however ridiculous it may appear, I remember it made a dreadful impression on my young mind. I never heard any story like it, save one of an old fox-hound that pursued a fox through the Grampians for a fortnight, and when at last discovered by the Duke of Athole's people, neither of them could run, but the hound was still continuing to walk after the fox, and when the latter lay down, the other lay down beside him, and looked at him steadily all the while, though unable to do him the least harm. The passion of inveterate malice seems to have influenced these two exactly alike. But, upon the whole, I scarcely believe the tale can be true.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LAIRD OF WINEHOLM.

"HAVE you heard any thing of the apparition which has been seen about Wineholm Place?" said the Dominie.

"Na, I never heard o' sic a thing as yet," quoth the smith; "but I wadna wonder muckle that the news should turn out to be true."

The Dominie shook his head, and uttered a long "h'm-h'm-h'm," as if he knew more than he was at liberty to tell.

"Weel, that beats the world," said the smith, as he gave over blowing the bellows, and looked anxiously in the Dominie's face.

The Dominie shook his head again.

The smith was now in the most ticklish quandary; eager to learn particulars, that he might spread the astounding news through the whole village, and the rest of the parish to boot, but yet afraid to press the inquiry, for fear the cautious Dominie should take the

alarm of being reported as a tattler, and keep all to himself. So the smith, after waiting till the wind-pipe of the great bellows ceased its rushing noise, covered the gloss neatly up with a mixture of small coals, cals, and cinders; and then, perceiving that nothing more was forthcoming from the Dominie, he began blowing again with more energy than before—changed his hand—put the other sooty one in his breeches-pocket—leaned to the horn—looked in a careless manner to the window, or rather gazed on vacancy, and always now and then stole a sly look at the Dominie's face. It was quite immovable. His cheek was leaned on his open hand, and his eyes fixed on the glowing fire. It was very teasing this for poor Clinkum the smith. But what could he do? He took out his glowing iron, and made a shower of fire sweep through the whole smithy, whereof a good part, as intended, sputtered upon the Dominie; but that imperturbable person only shielded his face with his elbow, turned his shoulder half round, and held his peace. Thump, thump! clink, clink! went the hammer for a space; and then when the iron was returned to the fire, "Weel, that beats the world!" quoth the smith.

"What is this that beats the world, Mr Clinkum?" asked the Dominie, with the most cool and provoking indifference.

"This story about the apparition," quoth the smith.

"What story?" said the Dominie.

Now really this perversity was hardly to be endured, even in a learned Dominie, who, with all his cold indifference of feeling, was sitting toasting himself at a good smithy fire. The smith felt this, (for he was a man of acute feeling,) and therefore he spit upon his hand and fell a-clinking and pelting at the stithy with both spirit and resignation, saying within himself, "These dominie bodies just beat the world!"

"What story?" reiterated the Dominie. "For my part, I related no story, nor have ever given assent to a belief in such a story that any man has heard. Nevertheless, from the results of ratiocination, conclusions may be formed, though not algebraically, yet corporately, by constituting a quantity, which shall be equivalent to the difference, subtracting the less from the greater, and striking a balance in order to get rid of any ambiguity or paradox."

At the long adverb, *nevertheless*, the smith gave over blowing, and pricked up his ears; but the definition went beyond his comprehension.

"Ye ken, that just beats the whole world for deepness," said the smith; and again began blowing the bellows.

"You know, Mr Clinkum," continued the Dominie, "that a proposition is an assertion of some distinct truth, which only becomes manifest by demonstration."

A corollary is an obvious, or easily inferred consequence of a proposition; while an hypothesis is a supposition, or concession made, during the process of demonstration. Now, do you take me along with you? Because, if you do not, it is needless to proceed."

"Yes, yes, I understand you middling weel; but I wad like better to hear what other folks say about it than you."

"And why so? Wherefore would you rather hear another man's demonstration than mine?" said the Dominie, sternly.

"Because, ye ken, ye just beat the whole world for words," quoth the smith.

"Ay, ay! that is to say, words without wisdom," said the Dominie, rising and stepping away. "Well, well, every man to his sphere, and the smith to the bel-lows."

"Ye're quite mistaen, master," cried the smith after him; "it isna the want o' wisdom in you that plagues me, it is the owerplush o't."

This soothed the Dominie, who returned, and said, mildly—"By the by, Clinkum, I want a leister of your making; for I see there is no other tradesman makes them so well. A five-grained one make it; at your own price."

"Very weel, sir. When will you be needing it?"

"Not till the end of close-time."

“Ay, ye may gar the three auld anes do till then.”

“What do you wish to insinuate, sir? Would you infer, because I have three leisters, that therefore I am a breaker of the laws? That I, who am placed here as a pattern and monitor of the young and rising generation, should be the first to set them an example of insubordination?”

“Na, but, ye ken, that just beats the world for words! but we ken what we ken, for a’ that, master.”

“You had better take a little care what you say, Mr Clinkum; just a little care. I do not request you to take particular care, for of that your tongue is incapable, but a very little is necessary. And mark you—don’t go to say that I said this or that about a ghost, or mentioned such a ridiculous story.”

“The crabbitness o’ that body beats the world!” said the smith to himself, as the Dominie went halting homeward.

The very next man that entered the smithy door was no other than John Broadcast, the new Laird’s hind, who had also been hind to the late laird for many years, and who had no sooner said his errand than the smith addressed him thus:—“Have you ever seen this ghost that there is such a noise about?”

“Ghost! Na, goodness be thankit, I never saw a ghost in my life, save since a wraith. What ghost do you mean?”

"So you never saw nor heard tell of any apparition about Wineholm Place, lately?"

"No, I hae reason to be thankfu' I have not."

"Weel, that beats the world! Whow, man, but ye are sair in the dark! Do you no think there are siccan things in nature, as folk no coming fairly to their ends, John?"

"Goodness be wi' us! Ye gar a' the hairs o' my head creep, man. What's that you're saying?"

"Had ye never ony suspicions o' that kind, John?"

"No; I canna say that I had."

"None in the least? Weel, that beats the world!"

"O, haud your tongue, haud your tongue! We hae great reason to be thankfu' that we are as we are!"

"How as we are?"

"That we arena stocks or stones, or brute beasts, as the Minister o' Traquair says. But I hope in God there is nae siccan a thing about my master's place as an unearthly visitor."

The smith shook his head, and uttered a long hem, hem, hem! He had felt the powerful effect of that himself, and wished to make the same appeal to the feelings and longings after information of John Broadcast. The bait took; for the latent spark of superstition, not to say any thing about curiosity, was kindled in the heart of honest John, and there being no wisin the head to counteract it, the portentous hint had its

full away. John's eyes stelled in his head, and his visage grew long, assuming something of the hue of dried clay in winter. "Hech, man, but that's an aw-some story!" exclaimed he. "Folks hae great reason to be thankfu' that they are as they are. It is truly an awesome story."

"Ye ken, it just beats the world for that," quoth the smith.

"And is it really thought that this Laird made away wi' our auld master?" said John.

The smith shook his head again, and gave a strait wink with his eyes.

"Weel, I hae great reason to be thankfu' that I never heard siccan a story as that!" said John. "Wha was it tauld you a' about it?"

"It was nae less a man than our mathewmatical Dominie," said the smith; "he that kens a' things, and can prove a proposition to the nineteenth part of a hair. But he is terrified the tale should spread; and therefore ye maunna say a word about it."

"Na; na; I hae great reason to be thankfu' I can keep a secret as weel as the maist feck o' men, and better than the maist feck o' women. What did he say? Tell us a' that he said."

"It is not so easy to repeat what he says, for he has sae mony lang-nebbit words, which just beat the world. But he said, though it was only a supposition,

yet it was easily made manifest by positive demonstration."

"Did you ever hear the like o' that! Now, havana we reason to be thankfu' that we are as we are? Did he say that it was by poison that he was taken off, or that he was strangled?"

"Na; I thought he said it was by a collar, or a col-lary, or something to that purpose."

"Then, it wad appear there is no doubt of it? I think, the Doctor has reason to be thankfu' that he's no taken up. Is not that strange?"

"O, ye ken, it just beats the world!"

"He deserves to be torn at young horses' tails," said the ploughman.

"Ay, or nip-pit to death with red-hot pinchers," quoth the smith.

"Or harrowed to death, like the children of Am-mon," continued the ploughman.

"Na, I'll tell you what should be done wi' him—he should just be docked and fired like a farcied horse," quoth the smith. "Od help ye, man, I could beat the world for laying on a proper poonishment."

John Broadcast went home full of terror and dismay. He told his wife the story in a secret—she told the dairymaid with a tenfold degree of secrecy; and so ere long it reached the ears of Dr Davington himself, the New Laird, as he was called. He was unusually

affected, at hearing such a terrible accusation against himself; and the Dominie being mentioned as the propagator of the report, a message was forthwith dispatched to desire him to come up to the Place, and speak with the Laird. The Dominie suspected there was bad blood a-brewing against him; and as he had too much self-importance to think of succumbing to any man alive, he sent an impertinent answer to the Laird's message, bearing, that if Dr Davington had any business with him, he would be so good as attend at his class-room when he dismissed his scholars.

When this message was delivered, the Doctor, being almost beside himself with rage, instantly dispatched two village constables with a warrant to seize the Dominie, and bring him before him; for the Doctor was a justice of the peace. Accordingly, the poor Dominie was seized at the head of his pupils, and dragged away, crutch and all, up before the new Laird, to answer for such an abominable slander. The Dominie denied every thing concerning it, as indeed he might, save having asked the smith the simple question, "if he had heard ought of a ghost at the Place?" But he refused to tell why he asked that question. He had his own reasons for it, he said, and reasons that to him were quite sufficient; but as he was not obliged to disclose them, neither would he.

The smith was then sent for, who declared that the

Dominie had told him of the ghost being seen, and a murder committed, which he called a *rust assassination*, and said it was obvious, and easily inferred that it was done by a collar.

How the Dominie did storm! He even twice threatened to knock down the smith with his crutch; not for the slander,—he cared not for that nor the Doctor a pin,—but for the total subversion of his grand illustration from geometry; and he therefore denominated the smith's head *the logarithm to number one*, a reproach of which I do not understand the gist, but the appropriation of it pleased the Dominie exceedingly, made him chuckle, and put him in better humour for a good while. It was in vain that he tried to prove that his words applied only to the definition of a problem in geometry,—he could not make himself understood; and the smith maintaining his point firmly, and apparently with conscientious truth, appearances were greatly against the Dominie, and the Doctor pronounced him a malevolent and dangerous person.

“O, ye ken, he just beats the world for that,” quoth the smith.

“I a malevolent and dangerous person, sir!” said the Dominie, fiercely, and altering his crutch from one place to another of the floor, as if he could not get a place to set it on. “Dost thou call me a malevolent and dangerous person, sir? What then art thou? If

then knowest not I will tell thee. Add a cipher to a ninth figure, and what does that make? Ninety you will say. Ay, but then put a cipher *above* a nine, and what does that make? ha—ha—ha—I have you there. Your case exactly in higher geometry! for say the chord of sixty degrees is radius, then the sine of ninety degrees is equal to the radius, so the secant of 0, that is nickle-nothing, as the boys call it, is radius, and so is the co-sine of 0. The versed sine of 90 degrees is radius, (that is nine with a cipher added, you know,) and the versed sine of 180 degrees is the diameter; then of course the sine increases from 0 (that is cipher or nothing) till it becomes radius, and then it decreases till it becomes nothing. After this you note it lies on the *contrary* side of the diameter, and consequently, if positive before, is negative now, so that it must end in 0, or a cipher above a nine at most.”

“This unintelligible jargon is out of place here, Mr Dominie; and if you can show no better reasons for raising such an abominable falsehood, in representing me as an incendiary and murderer, I shall procure you a lodging in the house of correction.”

“Why, sir, the long and short of the matter is this—I only asked at that fellow there, that logarithm of stupidity! if he had heard aught of a ghost having been seen about Wineholm Place. I added nothing farther,

either positive or negative. Now, do you insist on my reasons for asking such a question?"

"I insist on having them."

"Then what will you say, sir, when I inform you, and declare my readiness to depone to the truth of it, that I saw the ghost myself?—yes, sir—that I saw the ghost of your late worthy father-in-law myself, sir; and though I said no such thing to that decimal fraction, yet it told me, sir—yes, the spirit of your father-in-law told me, sir, that you are a murderer."

"Lord, now, what think ye o' that?" quoth the smith. "Ye had better hae letten him alane; for od, ye ken, he's the deevil of a body that ever was made! He just beats the world!"

The Doctor grew as pale as death, but whether from fear or rage, it was hard to say. "Why, sir, you are mad! stark, raving mad," said the Doctor; "therefore for your own credit, and for the peace and comfort of my wife and myself, and our credit among our retainers, you must unsay every word that you have now said."

"I'll just as soon say that the parabola and the ellipsis are the same," said the Dominie; "or that the diameter is not the longest line that can be drawn in the circle. And now, sir, since you have forced me to divulge what I was much in doubt about, I have a great

mind to have the old Laird's grave opened to-night, and have the body inspected before witnesses."

"If you dare disturb the sanctuary of the grave," said the Doctor vehemently, "or with your unhallowed hands touch the remains of my venerable and revered predecessor, it had been better for you, and all who make the attempt, that you never had been born. If not then for my sake, for the sake of my wife, the sole daughter of the man to whom you have all been obliged, let this abominable and malicious calumny go no farther, but put it down; I pray of you to put it down, as you would value your own advantage."

"I have seen him, and spoke with him—that I aver," said the Dominie. "And shall I tell you what he said to me?"

"No, no! I'll hear no more of such absolute and disgusting nonsense," said the Laird.

"Then, since it hath come to this, I will declare it in the face of the whole world, and pursue it to the last," said the Dominie, "ridiculous as it is, and I confess that it is even so. I have seen your father-in-law within the last twenty hours; at least a being in his form and habiliments, and having his aspect and voice. And he told me, that he believed you were a very great scoundrel, and that you had helped him off the stage of time in a great haste, for fear of the operation of a will, which he had just executed, very much to your prejudice. I

was somewhat aghast, but ventured to remark, that he must surely have been sensible whether you murdered him or not, and in what way. He replied, that he was not absolutely certain, for at the time you put him down, he was much in his customary way of nights, ~~very~~ very drunk; but that he greatly suspected you had hanged him, for, ever since he had died, he had been troubled with a severe crick in his neck. Having seen my late worthy patron's body deposited in the coffin, and afterwards consigned to the grave, these things overcame me, and a kind of mist came over my senses; but I heard him saying as he withdrew, what a pity it was that my nerves could not stand this disclosure. Now, for my own satisfaction, I am resolved that to-morrow, I shall raise the village, with the two ministers at the head of the multitude, and have the body, and particularly the neck of the deceased, minutely inspected."

"If you do so, I shall make one of the number," said the Doctor. "But I am resolved that in the first place every mean shall be tried to prevent a scene of madness and absurdity so disgraceful to a well-regulated village, and a sober community."

"There is but one direct line that can be followed, and any other would either form an acute or obtuse angle," said the Dominie; "therefore I am resolved to proceed right forward, on mathematical principles;" and

away he went, skipping on his crutch, to arouse the villagers to the scrutiny.

The smith remained behind, concerting with the Doctor, how to controvert the Dominie's profound scheme of unshrouding the dead; and certainly the smith's plan, viewed professionally, was not amiss. "O, ye ken, sir, we maun just gie him another heat, and try to saften him to reason, for he's just as stubborn as Muirkirk ir'n. He beats the world for that."

While the two were in confabulation, Johnston, the old house-servant, came in and said to the Doctor—"Sir, your servants are going to leave the house, every one, this night, if you cannot fall on some means to divert them from it. The old Laird is, it seems, risen again, and come back among them, and they are all in the utmost consternation. Indeed, they are quite out of their reason. He appeared in the stable to Broadcast, who has been these two hours dead with terror, but is now recovered, and telling such a tale down stairs, as never was heard from the mouth of man."

"Send him up here," said the Doctor. "I will silence him. What does the ignorant clown mean by joining in this unnatural clamour?"

John came up, with his broad bonnet in his hand, shut the door with hesitation, and then felt twice with his hand if it really was shut. "Well, John," said the Doctor, "what absurd lie is this that you are vending

"...that fellow servant of having seen a ghost?" John turned away with a look of incredulity out of his countenance, and said nothing. "You are an old superstitious fellow," continued the Doctor; "but if you happen in future to manufacture such stories, you must, from this instant, do it somewhere else than in my service, and among my domestics. What have you to say for yourself?"

"Indeed, sir, I hae naething to say but this, that we hae a muckle reason to be thankfu' that we are as we are."

"And whereon does that wise saw bear? What relation has that to the seeing of a ghost? Confess then this instant, that you have forged and vended a deliberate lie."

"Indeed, sir, I hae muckle reason to be thankfu'"—

"For what?"

"That I never tauld a deliberate lee in my life. My late master came and spake to me in the stable; but whether it was his ghaist or himsell—a good angel or a bad ane, I hae reason to be thankfu' I never said; for I *do—not—ken*."

"Now, pray let us hear from that sage tongue of yours, so full of sublime adages, what this doubtful being said to you?"

"I wad rather be excused, an it were your honour's will, and wad hae reason to be thankfu'."

“ And why should you decline telling this ? ”

“ Because I ken ye wadna believe a word o’t, it is siccan a strange story. O sirs, but folks hae muckle reason to be thankfu’ that they are as they are ! ”

“ Well, out with this strange story of yours. I do not promise to credit it, but shall give it a patient hearing, provided you swear that there is no forgery in it.”

“ Weel, as I was suppering the horses the night, I was dressing my late kind master’s favourite mare, and I was just thinking to mysell, An he had been leeving, I wadna hae been my lane the night, for he wad hae been standing over me cracking his jokes, and swearing at me in his good-natured hamely way. Aye, but he’s gane to his lang account, thinks I, and we poor frail dying creatures that are left ahind hae muckle reason to be thankfu’ that we are as we are ; when I looks up, and behold there’s my auld master standing leaning against the tri-vage, as he used to do, and looking at me. I canna but say my heart was a little astoundit, and maybe lap up through my midriff into my breath-bellows—I couldna say ; but in the strength o’ the Lord I was enabled to retain my senses for a good while. ‘ John Broadcast,’ said he, with a deep and angry tone,—‘ John Broadcast, what the d—l are you thinking about ? You are not currying that mare half. What a d—d lubberly way of dressing a horse is that ? ’

“ ‘L—d make us thankfu’, master !’ says I, ‘are you there?’

“ ‘Where else would you have me to be at this hour of the night, old blockhead?’ says he.

“ ‘In another hame than this, master,’ says I; ‘but I fear me it is nae good ane, that ye are sae soon tired o’t.’

“ ‘A d—d bad one, I assure you,’ says he.

“ ‘Ay, but, master,’ says I, ‘ye hae muckle reason to be thankfu’ that ye are as ye are.’

“ ‘In what respects, dotard?’ says he.

“ ‘That ye hae liberty to come out o’t a start now and then to get the air,’ says I; and oh, my heart was sair for him when I thought o’ his state ! and though I was thankfu’ that I was as I was, my heart and flesh began to fail me, at thinking of my being speaking face to face wi’ a being frae the unhappy place. But out he briks again wi’ a grit round o’ swearing about the mare being ill keepit; and he ordered me to cast my coat and curry her weel, for that he had a lang journey to take on her the morn.

“ ‘You take a journey on her!’ says I, ‘I fear my new master will dispute that privilege with you, for he rides her himsell the morn.’

“ ‘He ride her!’ cried the angry spirit; and then it burst out into a lang string of imprecations, fearsome to hear, against you, sir; and then added, ‘Soon soon shall

he be levelled with the dust ! The dog ! the parricide ! first to betray my child, and then to put down myself ! —But he shall not escape ! he shall not escape !” cried he with such a hellish growl, that I fainted, and heard no more.”

“ Weel, that beats the world !” quoth the smith ; “ I wad hae thought the mare wad hae luppen ower yird and stane, or fa’en down dead wi’ fright.”

“ Na, na,” said John, “ in place o’ that, whenever she heard him fa’ a-swearing, she was sae glad that she fell a-nickering.”

“ Na, but that beats the haill world a’thegither !” quoth the smith. “ Then it has been nae ghaist ava, ye may depend on that.”

“ I little wat what it was,” said John, “ but it was a being in nae good or happy state o’ mind, and is a warning to us a’ hów muckle reason we hae to be thankfu’ that we are as we are.”

The Doctor pretended to laugh at the absurdity of John’s narrative, but it was with a ghastly and doubtful expression of countenance, as though he thought the story far too ridiculous for any clodpole to have contrived out of his own head ; and forthwith he dismissed the two dealers in the marvellous, with very little ceremony, the one protesting that the thing beat the world, and the other that they had both reason to be thankfu’ that they were as they were.

The next morning the villagers, small and great, were assembled at an early hour to witness the lifting of the body of their late laird, and headed by the established and dissenting clergymen, and two surgeons, they proceeded to the tomb; and soon extracted the splendid coffin, which they opened with all due caution and ceremony. But instead of the murdered body of their late benefactor, which they expected in good earnest to find, there was nothing in the coffin but a layer of gravel, of about the weight of a corpulent man !

The clamour against the new laird then rose all at once into a tumult that it was impossible to check, every one declaring aloud that he had not only murdered their benefactor, but, for fear of the discovery, had raised the body, and given, or rather sold it, for dissection. The thing was not to be tolerated ! so the mob proceeded in a body up to Wineholm Place, to take out their poor deluded lady, and burn the Doctor and his basely acquired habitation to ashes. It was not till the multitude had surrounded the house, that the ministers and two or three other gentlemen could stay them, which they only did by assuring the mob that they would bring out the Doctor before their eyes, and deliver him up to justice. This pacified the throng ; but on inquiry at the hall, it was found that the Doctor had gone off early that morning, so that nothing further could be

done for the present. But the coffin, filled with gravel, was laid up in the aisle, and kept open for inspection.

Nothing could now exceed the consternation of the simple villagers of Wineholm at these dark and mysterious events. Business, labour, and employment of every sort, were at a stand, and the people hurried about to one another's houses, and mingled their conjectures together in one heterogeneous mass. The smith put his hand to the bellows, but forgot to blow till the fire went out; the weaver leaned on his beam, and listened to the legends of the ghastly tailor. The team stood in mid furrow, and the thrasher agaping over his flail; and even the Dominie was heard to declare that the geometrical series of events was increasing by no common measure, and therefore ought to be calculated rather arithmetically than by logarithms; and John Broadcast saw more and more reason for being thankful that he was as he was, and neither a stock nor a stone, nor a brute beast.

Everynewthing that happened was more extraordinary than the last; and the most puzzling of all was the circumstance of the late Laird's mare, saddle, bridle, and all, being off before day the next morning; so that Dr Davington was obliged to have recourse to his own, on which he was seen posting away on the road towards Edinburgh. It was thus but too obvious that the ghost of the late Laird had ridden off on his favourite mare,

the Lord only knew whither it for as to that point none of the sages of Wineholm could divine. But their souls grew chill as an iceberg, and their very frames rigid, at the thoughts of a spirit riding away on a brute beast to the place appointed for wicked men. And had not John Broadcast reason to be thankful that he was as he was? ... However, the outcry of the community became so outrageous, of murder, and foul play in so many ways, that the officers of justice were compelled to take note of it; and accordingly the Sheriff-substitute, the Sheriff-clerk, the Fiscal, and two assistants, came in two chaises to Wineholm to take a precognition; and there a court was held which lasted the whole day, at which, Mrs Davington, the late Laird's only daughter, all the servants, and a great number of the villagers, were examined on oath. It appeared from the evidence that Dr Davington had come to the village and set up as a surgeon—that he had used every endeavour to be employed in the Laird's family in vain, as the latter detested him. That he, however, found means of inducing his only daughter to elope with him, which put the Laird quite beside himself, and from thenceforward he became drowned in dissipation. That such; however, was his affection for his daughter, that he caused her to live with him, but would never suffer the Doctor to enter his door—that it was nevertheless quite customary for the Doctor to be sent for to his

lady's chamber, particularly when her father was in his cups; and that on a certain night, when the Laird had had company, and was so overcome that he could not rise from his chair, he had died suddenly of apoplexy; and that no other skill was sent for, or near him, but this his detested son-in-law, whom he had by will disinherited, though the legal term for rendering that will competent had not expired. The body was confined the second day after death, and locked up in a low room in one of the wings of the building; and nothing farther could be elicited. The Doctor was missing, and it was whispered that he had absconded; indeed it was evident, and the Sheriff acknowledged, that according to the evidence taken, the matter had a very suspicious aspect, although there was no direct proof against the Doctor. It was proved that he had attempted to bleed the patient, but had not succeeded, and that at that time the old Laird was black in the face.

When it began to wear nigh night, and nothing farther could be learned, the Sheriff-clerk, a quiet considerate gentleman, asked why they had not examined the wright who made the coffin, and also placed the body in it? The thing had not been thought of; but he was found in court, and instantly put into the witness's box, and examined on oath. His name was James Sanderson, a stout-made, little, shrewd-looking

man, with a very peculiar squint. He was examined thus by the Procurator-fiscal.

"Were you long acquainted with the late Laird of Wineholm, James?"

"Yes, ever since I left my apprenticeship; for I suppose about nineteen years."

"Was he very much given to drinking of late?"

"I could not say. He took his glass geyan heartily."

"Did you ever drink with him?"

"O yes, mony a time."

"You must have seen him very drunk then? Did you ever see him so drunk that he could not rise, for instance?"

"O never! for, lang afore that, I could not have kenn'd whether he was sitting or standing."

"Were you present at the corpse-chesting?"

"Yes, I was."

"And were you certain the body was then deposited in the coffin?"

"Yes; quite certain."

"Did you screw down the coffin-lid firmly then, as you do others of the same make?"

"No, I did not."

"What were your reasons for that?"

"They were no reasons of mine—I did what I was ordered. There were private reasons, which I then

wist not of. But, gentlemen, there are some things connected with this affair, which I am bound in honour not to reveal—I hope you will not compel me to divulge them at present.”

“ You are bound by a solemn oath, James, which is the highest of all obligations ; and for the sake of justice, you must tell every thing you know ; and it would be better if you would just tell your tale straight forward, without the interruption of question and answer.”

“ Well, then, since it must be so : That day, at the chasting, the Doctor took me aside, and says to me, ‘ James Sanderson, it will be necessary that something be put into the coffin to prevent any unpleasant flavour before the funeral ; for, owing to the corpulence, and inflamed state of the body by apoplexy, there will be great danger of this.’

“ ‘ Very well, sir,’ says I—‘ what shall I bring ?’

“ ‘ You had better only screw down the lid lightly at present, then,’ said he, ‘ and if you could bring a bucketful of quicklime, a little while hence, and pour it over the body, especially over the face, it is a very good thing, an excellent thing for preventing any deleterious effluvia from escaping.’

“ ‘ Very well, sir,’ says I ; and so I followed his directions. I procured the lime ; and as I was to come privately in the evening to deposit it in the coffin, in

company with the Doctor alone, I was putting off the time in my workshop, polishing some trifle, and thinking to myself that I could not find in my heart to choke up my old friend with quicklime, even after he was dead, when, to my unspeakable horror, who should enter my workshop but the identical Laird himself, dressed in his dead-clothes in the very same manner in which I had seen him laid in the coffin, but apparently all streaming in blood to the feet. I fell back over against a cart-wheel, and was going to call out, but could not ; and as he stood straight in the door, there was no means of escape. At length the apparition spoke to me in a hoarse trembling voice, enough to have frightened a whole conclave of bishops out of their senses ; and it says to me, ‘ Jamie Sanderson ! O, Jamie Sanderson ! I have been forced to appear to you in a d—d frightful guise ! ’ These were the very first words it spoke,—and they were far frae being a lie ; but I haffins thought to mysell, that a being in such circumstances might have spoke with a little more caution and decency. I could make no answer, for my tongue refused all attempts at articulation, and my lips would not come together ; and all that I could do, was to lie back against my new cart-wheel, and hold up my hands as a kind of defence. The ghastly and blood-stained apparition, advancing a step or two, held up

both its hands, flying with dead ruffles, and cried to me in a still more frightful voice, ‘ O, my faithful old friend ! I have been murdered ! I am a murdered man, Jamie Sanderson ! and if you do not assist me in bringing upon the wretch due retribution, you will be damned to hell, sir.’ ”

“ This is sheer raving, James,” said the Sheriff, interrupting him. “ These words can be nothing but the ravings of a disturbed and heated imagination. I entreat you to recollect, that you have appealed to the great Judge of heaven and earth for the truth of what you assert here, and to answer accordingly.”

“ I know what I am saying, my Lord Sheriff,” said Sanderson ; “ and am telling naething but the plain truth, as nearly as my state of mind at the time permits me to recollect. The appalling figure approached still nearer and nearer to me, breathing threatenings if I would not rise and fly to its assistance, and swearing like a sergeant of dragoons at both the Doctor and myself. At length it came so close on me, that I had no other shift but to hold up both feet and hands to shield me, as I had seen herons do when knocked down by a goshawk, and I cried out ; but even my voice failed, so that I only cried like one through his sleep.

“ ‘ What the devil are you lying gaping and braying at there ? ’ said he, seizing me by the wrists, and

dragging me after him. ‘Do you not see the plight I am in, and why won’t you fly to succour me?’

“I now felt to my great relief, that this terrific apparition was a being of flesh, blood, and bones, like myself; that, in short, it was indeed my kind old friend the Laird popped out of his open coffin, and come over to pay me an evening visit, but certainly in such a guise as earthly visit was never paid. I soon gathered up my scattered senses, took my old friend into my room, bathed him all over, and washed him well in lukewarm water; then put him into a warm bed, gave him a glass or two of warm punch, and he came round amazingly. He caused me to survey his neck a hundred times I am sure; and I had no doubt he had been strangled, for there was a purple ring round it, which in some places was black, and a little swollen; his voice creaked like a door hinge, and his features were still distorted. He swore terribly at both the Doctor and myself; but nothing put him half so mad as the idea of the quicklime being poured over him, and particularly over his face. I am mistaken if that experiment does not serve him for a theme of execration as long as he lives.”

“So he is then alive, you say?” asked the Fiscal.

“O yes, sir! alive and tolerably well, considering. We two have had several bottles together in my quiet room; for I have still kept him concealed, to see what

the Doctor would do next. He is in terror for him somehow, until sixty days be over from some date that he talks of, and seems assured that that dog will have his life by hook or crook, unless he can bring him to the gallows betimes, and he is absent on that business to-day. One night lately, when fully half-~~was~~ over, he set off to the schoolhouse, and frightened the Dominie; and last night he went up to the stable, and gave old Broadcast a hearing for not keeping his mare well enough.

“ It appeared that some shaking motion in the confining of him had brought him to himself, after bleeding abundantly both at mouth and nose; that he was on his feet ere ever he knew how he had been disposed of, and was quite shocked at seeing the open coffin on the bed, and himself dressed in his grave-clothes, and all in one bath of blood. He flew to the door, but it was locked outside; he rapped furiously for something to drink; but the room was far removed from any inhabited part of the house, and none regarded. So he had nothing for it but to open the window, and come through the garden and the back loaning to my workshop. And as I had got orders to bring a bucketful of quicklime, I went over in the forenight with a bucketful of heavy gravel, as much as I could carry, and a little white lime sprinkled on the top of it; and being let in by the Doctor, I de-

posited that in the coffin, screwed down the lid, and left it; and the funeral followed in due course; the whole of which the Laird viewed from my window, and gave the Doctor a hearty day's cursing for daring to support his head and lay it in the grave.—And this, gentlemen, is the substance of what I know concerning this enormous deed, which is, I think, quite sufficient. The Laird bound me to secrecy until such time as he could bring matters to a proper bearing for securing of the Doctor; but as you have forced it from me, you must stand my surety, and answer the charges against me.”

The Laird arrived that night with proper authority, and a number of officers, to have the Doctor, his son-in-law, taken into custody; but the bird had flown; and from that day forth he was never seen, so as to be recognised, in Scotland. The Laird lived many years after that; and though the thoughts of the quicklime made him drink a great deal, yet from that time he never suffered himself to get *quite* drunk, lest some one might have taken it into his head to hang him, and he not know any thing about it. The Dominie acknowledged that it was as impracticable to calculate what might happen in human affairs as to square the circle, which could only be effected by knowing the ratio of the circumference to the radius. For shoeing horses, vending news, and awarding proper

punishments, the smith to this day just beats the world. And old John Broadcast is as thankful to Heaven as ever that things are as they are.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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THE
SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR.

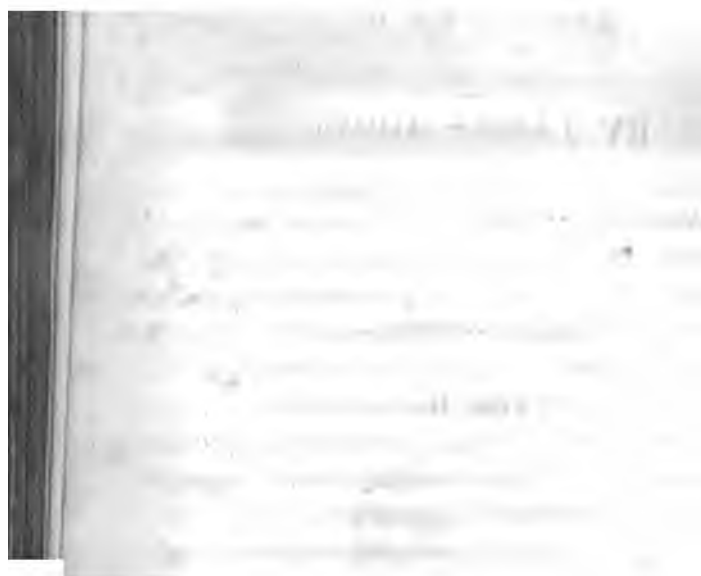
BY JAMES HOGG,
AUTHOR OF "THE QUEEN'S WAKE," &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH;
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THE
SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR.

CHAPTER I.

WINDOW WAT'S COURTSHIP.

GREAT have been the conquests, and grievous the deray, wrought in the hearts of the rustic youth by some mountain nymphs. The confusion that particular ones have sometimes occasioned for a year or two almost exceeds credibility. When any young woman has obtained a great reputation for beauty, every young man in the bounds is sure either to be in love with her, or to believe that he is so ; and as all these run on a Friday's evening to woo her, of course the pride and vanity of the fair is raised to such a height, that she will rarely yield a preference to any, but is sure to put them all off with gibes and jeers. This shyness, instead of allaying, never fails to increase, the fervour of

the flame ; an emulation, if not a rivalry, is excited among the youngers, until the getting a single word exchanged with the reigning beauty becomes a matter of thrilling interest to many a tender-hearted swain ; but, generally speaking, none of these admired beauties are married till they settle into the more quiet vale of life, and the current of admiration has turned towards others. Then do they betake themselves to sober reflection, listen to the most rational, though not the most youthful, of their lovers, and sit down, contented to share through life the toils, sorrows, and joys of the humble cot.

I am not now writing of ladies, nor of "farmers' bonny daughters ;" but merely of country maidens, such as ewe-milkers, hay-workers, har'st-shearers, the healthy and comely daughters of shepherds, hinds, country tradesmen, and small tenants ; in short, all the rosy, romping, and light-hearted dames that handle the sickle, the hoe, the hay-raik, and the fleece. And of these I can say, to their credit, that rarely an instance happens of a celebrated beauty turning out a bad, or even an indifferent wife. This is perhaps owing to the circumstance of their never marrying very young, (for a youthful marriage of a pair who have nought but their exertions and a good name to depend on for the support of a family, is far from being a prudent, or highly commendable step,) or that these belles, having had too

much experience in the follies and flippancies of youthful love, and youthful lovers, make their choice at last on principles of reason ; or it may be owing to another reason still, namely, that among the peasantry young men never flock about, or make love to a girl who is not noted for activity, as well as beauty. Cleverness is always the first recommendation ; and consequently, when a young woman so endowed chooses to marry, it is natural to suppose that the good qualities, which before were only occasionally called into exercise, will then be exerted to the utmost. Experience is the great teacher among the labouring class, and her maxims are carried down from father to son in all their pristine strength. Seldom are they violated in any thing, and never in this. No young man will court a beautiful daw, unless he be either a booby or a rake.

In detailing a signal instance of the power of country beauty, I shall make use of fictitious names ; and as I have not been an eye-witness to the scenes I mean to detail, I judge it best to give them in the colloquial style, exactly in the same manner as they have been rehearsed to me. Without adopting this mode, I might make a more perfect arrangement in my present story, but could not give it any degree of the interest it appeared to me to possess ; nor could the characters be exhibited so well in any way as by letting them speak for themselves.

"Wat, what was the matter wi' you, that ye never keepit your face to the minister the last Sabbath day? Yon's an unco unreverend gate in a kirk, man. I hae seen you keep a good ee on the preacher, and take good tent to what was gaun, too; and troth I'm wae to see ye altered to the waur."

"I kenna how I might chance to be looking, but I hope I was listening as weel as you, or ony that was there!—Heighow! It's a weary warld this!"

"What has made it siccan a weary warld, Wat? I'm sure it wasna about the ills o' life that the minister was preaching that day, that has gart ye change sae sair? Now, Wat, I tentit ye weel a' the day, and I'll be in your debt for a toop lamb at Michaelmass, gin ye'll just tell me ae distinct sentence o' the sermon on Sabbath last."

"Hout, Jock, man! ye ken I dinna want to make a jest about ony saacred thing; and as for your paulie toop lamb, what care I for it?"

"Ye needna think to win aff that gate, callant. Just confess, the truth, that ye never heard a word the good man said, and that baith your heart and your ee war fixed on some object in the contrair direction. And I may be mistaen, but I think I could guess what it was."

“Whisht, lad, and let us alane o’ your sinfu’ surmeeses. I might turn my back on the minister during the time o’ the prayer; but that was for getting a lean on the seat, and what ill was in that?”

“Ay, and ye might likewise hirsell yourself up to the corner o’ the seat a’ the time o’ baith the sermons, and lean your head on your hand, and look through your fingers too. Can ye deny this? or that your een were fixed the hail day on ae particular place?”

“Aweel, I winna gie a friend the lee to his face. But this I will say—that an you had been gieing a’ the attention to the minister, that ane should do wha takes it upon him to lecture his neighbours at this rate, ye wadna hae been sae weel aveessed with respect to my behaviour in the kirk. Take that for your share o’ blame. And mair than that, if I’m nae waur than you, neither am I waur than other folk; for an ye had lookit sae weel at a’ the rest as it seems ye did at me, ye wad hae seen that a’ the men in the kirk were looking the same gate.”

“And a’ at the same object too? And a’ as deeply interested in it as you? Isna that what ye’re thinking? Ah, Wat, Wat! love winna hide! I saw a pair o’ slae-black een that threw some geyan saucy disdainfu’ looks up the kirk, and I soon saw the havoc they were making, and had made, i’ your simple honest heart. Wow, man! but I fear me you are in a bad predickiment.”

"Weel, weel, murder will out, and I confess between twa friends, Jock, there never was a lad in sic a predickiment as I am. I needna keep ought frae you; but for the life that's i' your bonk, dianna let a pater about it escape frae atween your lips. I wadna that it were kenn'd how deeply I am in love, and how little it is like to be requited, for the haill warld! But I am this day as miserable a man as breathes the breath o' life. For I like yon lass as man never likit another, and a' that I get is scorn, and gibes, and mockery in return. O Jock, I wish I was dead in an honest natural way, and that my burial day were the morn!"

"Weel, after a', I daresay that is the best way o' winding up a hopeless love concern. But only it ought surely to be the last resource. Now, will ye be candid; and tell me gin ye hae made all lawful endeavours to preserve your ain life, as the commandment requires us to do, ye ken? Hae ye courtit the lass as a man ought to court her who is in every respect her equal?"

"Oh, yes, I have! I have told her a' my love, and a' my sufferings; but it has been only to be mockit, and dismissed about my business."

"And for that ye whine and mak wry faces, as you are doing just now? Na, na, Wat, that's no the gate o't;—a maid maun just be wooed in the same spirit she shows; and when she shows sauciness, there's naething for it but taking a step higher than her in the

same humour, letting her always ken, and always see, that you are naturally her superier, and that you havena forgotten that you are even stooping from your dignity when you condescend to ask her to become your equal. If she refuse to be your jee at the fair, never either whine or look disappointed, but be sure to wale the bonniest lass you can get in the market, and lead her to the same party where your saucy dame is. Take her to the top o' the dance, the top o' the table at dinner, and laugh, and sing; and aye between hands, whisper your bonny partner; and if your ain lass disna happen to be unce weel buckled, it is ten to ane she will find an opportunity of offering you her company afore night. If she look angry or offended at your attention to others, you are sure o' her. They are queer creatures the lasses, Wat, and I rather dread ye haena muckle skill or experience in their bits o' wily games. For, to tell you the truth, there's naething pleases me sae weel as to see them begin to pout, and prim, their bits o' gabs, and look sulky out frae the wick o' the ee, and gar ilka feather and flower-knot quiver wi' their angry capers; for let me tell you, it is a great matter to get them to take offence—it lets a man see they are vexed for the loss o' him."

"If you had ever loved as I do, Jock, ye wad hae found little comfort in their offence. For my part, every disdainfu' word that yon dear lovely lassie says,

gangs to my heart like a red-hot spindle. My life is bound up in her favour. It is only in it that I can live, move, or breathe; and whenever she says a severe or cutting word to me, I feel as if ane o' my members were torn away, and am glad to escape as lang as I am ony thing ava; for I find, if I war to remain, a few mae siccan sentences wad soon annihilate me."

"Ou ay! you're a buirdly chield, to be sure; but I have nae doubt ye wad melt away like snaw off a dike, or a dead sheep weel pykit by the corbies! Wow, man, but it maks me wae to think o't! and sae, to save you frae sic a melancholy end, I shall take in hand to bring her to your ain terms, in three months' time, if you will take my advice."

"O man, speak; for ye are garring a' the blood in my veins rin up to my head, as gin it war a thousand ants galloping like mad, running races."

"Weel, Wat, in the first place, I propose to gang down yonder a night by mysell, and speak baith to her father and her, to find how the land lies; and after that we can gang down baith thegither, and gie her a fair broadside.—The deil's in't, if we sanna bring her to reason."

Wat scratched his head, and pulled the grass (that was quite blameless in the affair) furiously up by the roots, but made no answer. On being urged to declare his sentiments, he said, "I dinna ken about that way

o' ganging down your lane; I wish you maunna stick by the auld fisher's rule, 'Every man for his ain hand.' For I ken weel, that nae man alive can see her, and speak to her, and no be in love wi' her."

"It is a good thing in love affairs, Wat, that there are hardly two in the world wha think the same way."

"Ay; but this is a particular case; for a' the men in the country think the same gate here, and rin the same gate to the wooing. It is impossible to win near the house on a Friday night without knocking your head against that of some rival. Na, na, John, this plan o' ganging down by yoursell winna do. And now when I think on't, ye had better no gang down ava; for if we gang down friends, we'll come up enemies; and that wadna be a very agreeable catastroff."

"Now shame fa' me, gin ever I heard sic nonsense! To think that a' the warld see wi' your een! Hear ye, Wat—I wadna gie that snap o' my fingers for her. I never saw her till Sunday last, when I came to your kirk an' errand for that purpose, and I wadna ken her again gin I war to meet her here come out to the glen wi' your whey—what ails you, ye fool, that you're dighting your een?"

"Come out to the glen wi' *my* whey! Ah, man! the words gaed through me like the stang of a bumbee. Come out to the glen wi' *my* whey! Gude forgie my sin, what is the reason I canna thole that thought?"

That wae a communication devoutly to be waeed, as the songster in the Collection says. I fear I'll never see that blessed sight ! But, Jack, take my advice ; stay at home, and gangen near her, gin ye wad enjoy any peace o' conscience."

"Ye are marching about women, Wat, and as little about me. If I gang near her, it will only be to humiliate her a wee, and bring her to reason, for your sake. Jack the Jewel wishes say 'Wae's me !' for the best time : there is a' the Kingdom o' Britain—whatever some o' them might do for him."

Jack the Jewel went down in all his might and high experience, to put every thing to rights between his friend Wat and the bonny Snaw-fleck, as this pink of a mountain damsel was called : For be it understood, that every girl in the parish was named after one of the birds of the air ; and every man, too, young and old, had his by-name, by which we shall distinguish them all for the present. Thus the Snaw-fleck's father was called Tod-Lowrie, (the fox ;) his eldest daughter, the Eagle ; the second, the Sea-maw ; and his only son was denominated the Founmart, (pole-cat,) on account of a notable hunt he once had with one of these creatures in the middle of the night, in a strange house ;—and it was the worst name I ever heard for a young man. Our disconsolate lover was called Window Wat, on account of his bashful nature, and, as was alleged, be-

cause he was in the habit of hanging about the windows when he went a-courting, and never venturing in. It was a good while after this first rencounter before the two shepherds met again with the opportunity of resuming the discussion of their love affairs. But at length an occasion offered, and then—— But we must suffer every man to tell his own tale, else the sport will be spoilt.

“Weel, Wat, hae ye been ony mair down at Lowrie’s Lodge, sin’ I saw you?”

“And if I hae, I hae been little the better o’ you. I heard that you were there before me—and sinsyne too.”

“Now, Wat, that’s mere jealousy and suspicion, for ye didna see the lass to ken whether I was there or not. I ken ye wad be hingin about the window-soles as usual, keeking in, feasting your een, seeing other woosters beiking their shins at the ingle; but for a’ that, durstna venture ben. Come, I dinna like siccan sachless gates as thae. I *was* down, I se no deny’t, but I gaed to wark in a manner different from yours. Unco cauld rife wark that o’ standing peenging about windows, man! Come, tell me a’ your expedition, and I’ll tell you mine,—like friends, ye ken.”

“Mine’s no ill to tell. I gaed down that night after I saw you, e’en though Wednesday be the widower’s night. More than I were there, but I was fear’d ye

had got there afore me, and then, wi' your great skill o' the ways o' women, ye might hae left me nae chance at a'. I was there, but I might as weel hae staid at hame, for there were sae mony o' the out-wale wallie-tragle kind o' wooers there, like mysell, a' them that canna win ferret on a Friday night, that I got the back o' the hallan to keep; but there's ae good thing about the auld Tod's house,—they never dilt up their windows. Ane sees aye what's gaun on within doors. They leave a' their actions open to the ee o' man, yon family; and I often think it is nae ill sign o' them. Auld Tod-Lowrie himsell sometimes looks at the window in a kind o' considering mood, as if doubtful that at that moment he is both overheard and overseen; but, or it is lang, he cocks up his bonnet and cracks as crouse as ever, as if he thought again, 'There's aye ae ee that sees me at a' times, and a ear that hears me; and when that's the case, what need I care for a' the birkies o' the land!—I like that open independent way that the family has. But O, they are surely sair harassed wi' wooers!'

"The wooers are the very joy o' their hearts, excepting the Founmart's; he hates them a' unless they can tell him hunders o' lies about battles, bogles, and awfu' murders, and persecutions. And the leaving o' the windows open too is not without an aim. The Eagle is beginning to weary for a husband; and if ye'll notice how

dink she dresses hersell ilka night, and jinks away at the muckle wheel as she war spinning for a wager. They hae found out that they are often seen at night, yon lasses; and though they hae to work the foulest work o' the bit farm a' the day when naebody sees them, at night they are a' dressed up like pet-ewes for a market, and ilka ane is acting a part. The Eagle is yerking on at the wheel, and now and then gieing a smirk wi' her face to the window. The Snaw-fleck sits busy in the neuk, as sleek as a kinnen, and the auld clocker fornent her admiring and misca'ing her a' the time. The white Sea-maw flees up and down the house, but and ben, as while i' the spence, ane i' the awmrie, and then to the door wi' a soap-suds. Then the Founmart, he sits knitting his stocking, and quarrelling wi' the hail 6' them. The feint a haed he minds but sheer ill nature. If there be a good body i' the house, the auld Tod is the ane. He is a geyan honest, downright carle, the Tod."

"It is hardly the nature o' a tod to be sae; and there's no ae bit o' your description that I gang in wi'! It is a fine, douse family.

' But O the Snaw-fleck!
The bonny bonny Snaw-fleck!
She is the bird for me, O! "

"If love wad make you a poeter, Wat, I wad say it had wrought miracles. Ony mair about the bonny Snaw-fleck, eh? I wonder how you can make glow-

ing low-sung, standing at a coud window—No the way that man. Tell me plainly, did ye ever get a word o' the bonny lass ava?"

"Hes how me!—I can hardly say that I did; and yet I hae been three times there sin' I saw you."

"And get your travel for your pains a' the times?"

"No me had at that, neither. I had the pleasure o' seeing her, bonny, brow, innocent, and happy, busy working her mother's work. I saw her smile at her brother's cradlin words, and I saw the approving glances beam frae the twa auld folk's een. When her father made family-worship, she took her Bible, and followed devoutly wi' her ee the words o' holy writ, as the auld man read them; and her voice in singing the psalm was as mellow and as sweet as the flute playing afar off. Ye may believe me, Jack, when I saw her lift up her bonny face in sweet devotion, I stood on the outside o' the window, and gat like a bairn. It was mair than my heart could thole; and gin it warna for shame, I wad gang every night to enjoy the same heavenly vision."

"As I'm a Christian man, Wat, I believe love *has* made a power of you. Ye wanna believe me, man, that very woman is acting her part. Do you think she didna ken that ye saw her, and was making a' thae fine surgesons to throw glamour in your een, and gar you trow she was an angel? I managed otherwise; but it is best to tell a' plain out, like friends, ye ken. Weel,

down I goes to Lowrie's Lodge, and, like you, keeks in at the window; and the first thing I saw was the auld Tod toving out tobacco-reek like a moorburn. The haill biggin was sae chokefu' o' the vapour, it was like a dark mist, and I could see naething through it but his ain braid bonnet moving up and down like the tap o' the smith's bellows, at every poogh he gave. At length he handit by the pipe to the auld wife, and the reek soon turned mair moderate. I could then see the lasses a' dressed out like dolls, and several young boobies o' hinds, threshers, and thrum-cutters, sitting gash-ing and glowring among them.—I shall soon set your backs to the wa', thinks I, if I could get ony possible means o' introduction.—It wasna lang till ane offered; out comes a lass wi' a cog o' warm water, and she gars it a' clash on me. 'Thanks t'ye for your kindness, my woman,' says I. 'Ye canna say I hae gi'en ye a cauld reception,' says she. 'But wha are ye, standing like a thief i' the mirk?'—'Maybe kenn'd folk, gin it war day-light,' quo' I. 'Ye had better come in by, and see gin candle-light winna beet the mister,' says she. 'Thanks t'ye,' says I; 'but I wad rather hae you to come *out by*, and try gin stern-light winna do!'—'Catch me doing that,' cried she, and bounced into the house again.

"I then laid my lug close to the window, and heard ane asking wha that was she was speaking to? 'I dinna ken him,' quo' she; 'but I trow I hae gi'en him a

mark to ken him by ; I hae gi'en him a balsam o' boiling water.'

" ' I wish ye may hae peeled a' the hide aff his shins,' quo' the Founmart, and he mudded and leugh ; ' haste ye, dame, rin awa out and lay a plaster o' lime and linseed-oil to the lad's trams,' continued he.

" ' I can tell ye wha it is,' said ane o' the hamlet wooers ; ' it will be Jock the Jewel comed down frae the moors ; for I saw him waiting about the chop and the smiddy till the darkness came on. If ye hae disabled him, lady Seabird, the wind will blaw nae mair out o' the west.'

" I durstna trust them wi' my character and me in hearing ; sae, without mair ado, I gangs bauldly ben.—
' Gude e'en to ye, kimmers a' in a ring,' says I.

" ' Gude-e'en t'ye, honest lad,' quo' the Eagle.
' How does your cauld constitution and our potatoe-broo sort ?'

" ' Thanks t'ye, bonny lass,' says I. ' I hae gotten a right sair skelloch ; but I wish I warna woundit nae deeper somewhere else than i' the shinbanes ; I might shoot a flying erne for a' that's come and gane yet.'

" ' That's weel answered, lad,' quo' the Tod. ' Keep her down, for she's unco glib o' the gab,—especially to strangers.'

" ' You will never touch a feather o' her wing, lad,' quo' she. ' But if ye could—I'll say nae mair.'

“ ‘Na, na, Mistress Eagle, ye soar o’er high for me,’ says I. ‘I’ll bring down nae sky-cleaving harpies to pick the een out o’ my sheep, and my ain into the bargain, maybe. I see a bit bonny norland bird in the nook here, that I would rather woo to my little hamely nest. The Eagle maun to her eyry; or, as the auld ballant says—

‘Gasp and speel to her yermilt riven,
Amid the mists and the rains of heaven.’

It is the innocent, thrifty little Snaw-fleck that will suit me, wi’ the white wings and the blue body. She’s pleased wi’ the hardest and hameliest fare; a picking o’ the seeds o’ the pipe-bent is a feast to her.’”

“Now, by the faith o’ my body, Jewel, that wasna fair. Was that preparing the way for your friend’s success?”

“Naething but sheer banter, man; like friends, ye ken. But ye sall hear. ‘The Snaw-fleck’s a braw beast,’ said I, ‘but the Eagle’s a waster and a destroyer.’

“‘She’s true to her mate, though,’ said the dame; ‘but the tither is a bird o’ passage, and mate to the hail flock.’

“I was a wee startled at this observe, when I thought of the number of wooers that were rinning after the bonny Snaw-fleck. However, I didna like to yield to the haughty Eagle; and I added, that I wad take my chance o’ the wee Snaw-bird, for though she war ane of a flock,

that flock was an honest ane. This pleased them a'; and the auld slee Tod, he spake up and said, he hadna the pleasure o' being acquaint wi' me, but he hoped he shouldna hae it in his power to say sae again. Only there was ae thing he beggit to remind me o', before I went any farther, and that was, that the law of Padanaram was established in his family, and he could by no means give a younger daughter in marriage before one that was elder.

" ' I think you will maybe keep them for a gay while, then,' said the Fowmart. ' But if the Sea-gull wad stay at hame, I carena if the rest were at Bamph. She's the only usefu' body I see about the house.' "

" ' Haud the tongue o' thee, thou illfa'red, cat-witted serf,' said the auld wife. ' I'm sure ony o' them's worth a faggald o' thee ! And that lad, gin I dinna fore-cast aglee, wad do credit to ony kin.' "

" ' He's rather ower weel giftit o' the gab,' quo' the menseless thing. This remark threw a damp on my spirits a' the night after, and I rather lost ground than gained ony mair. The ill-hued weazel-blawn thing o' a brother, never missed an opportunity of gieing me a yerck wi' his ill-scrapit tongue, and the Eagle was aye gieing hints about the virtues o' potatoe-broo. The auld Tod chewed tobacco and threw his mouth, lookit whiles at ane and whiles at another, and seemed to enjoy the joke as muckle as ony o' them, As for the

bonny Snaw-bird, she never leugh aboon her breath, but eat as mim and as sleek as a moudie. There were some very pretty smiles and dimples gaun, but nae gaffawing. She is really a fine lass."

"There it goes now! I tauld you how it would be! I tell you, Jewel, the deil a bit o' this is fair play."

"Ane may tell what he thinks—like a friend, ye ken. Weel—to make a lang tale short—I couldna help seeing a' the forenigh that she had an ee to me. I couldna help *that*, ye ken. Gat mony a sweet blink and smile thrawn o'er the fire to me—couldna help *that* either, ye ken—never lost that a friend gets. At length a' the douce wooers drew off ane by ane—saw it was needless to dispute the point wi' me that night. Ane had to gang hame to supper his horses, another to fodder the kye, and another had to be hame afore his master took the book, else he had to gang supperless to bed. I sat still—needless to lose a good boon for lack o' asking. The potatoes were poured and cham-pit—nobody bade me bide to supper; but I sat still; and the auld wife she slippit away to the awmrie, and brought a knoll o' butter like ane's nieve, and slippit that into the potatoe-pot hidling ways, but the fine flavour that filled the house soon outed the secret. I drew in my seat wi' the rest, resolved to hae my share. I saw that I had a hearty welcome frae them a' but the Founmart, and I loot him girn as muckle as he liket.

Weel, I saw it was turning late, and there was a necessity for proceeding to business, else the prayers wad be on. Sae I draws to my plaid and staff, and I looks round to the lasses; but in the meantime I dropt half a wink to the Snaw-fleck, and I says, 'Weel, wha o' you bonny lasses sets me the length o' the townhead yett the night?'

" 'The feint a ane o' them,' quo' the Fowmart wi' a girn.

" 'The townhead yett the night, honest lad?' quo' the wife. 'Be my certe, thou's no gaun nae siccan a geat. Dis thou think thou can gang to the muirs the night? Nay, nay, thou shalt take share of a bed wi' our son till it be day, for the night's dark and the road's eiry."

" 'He needna stay unless he likes,' quo' the Fowmart.

" 'Haud thy tongue,' said the wife. So I sat down again, and we grew a' unco silent. At length the Eagle rose and flew to the door. It wadna do—I wadna follow; sat aye still, and threw another straight wink to the bonny Snaw-fleck, but the shy shirling sat snug in her corner, and wadna move. At length the Eagle comes gliding in, and in a moment, or ever I kenn'd what I was doing, claps down a wee table at my left hand, and the big Bible and psalm-book on't. I never get sic a steund, and really thought I wad sink down

through the floor ; and when I saw the laases shading their faces wi' their hands, I grew waur.

“ ‘ What ails thee, honest lad, that thou looks sae baulh ? ’ said the auld wife. ‘ Sure thou’s no asheamed to praise thy Meaker ? for an thou be, I shall be asheamed o’ thee. It is an auld family custom we hae, aye to gie a stranger the honour o’ being our leader in this duty ; and gin he refuse that, we dinna countenance him nea mair.’

“ That was a yerker ! I now fand I was fairly in the mire. For the saul o’ me I durstna take the book ; for though I had a good deal o’ good words by heart, I didna ken how I might gar them compluther. And as I took this to be a sort o’ test to try a wooer’s abilities, I could easily see that my hough was fairly i’ the sheep-crook, and that what wi’ sticking the psalm, bungling the prayer, potatoe-broo and a’ thegither, I was like to come badly off. Sae I says, ‘ Gudewife, I’m obliged t’ ye for the honour ye hae offered me ; and sae far frae being ashamed o’ my Maker’s service, I rejoice in it ; but I hae mony reasons for declining the honour. In the first place, war I to take the task out o’ the gude-man’s hand, it wad be like the youngest scholar o’ the school pretending to teach his master ; and were I to stay here a’ night, it wad be principally for the purpose of hearing family worship frae his ain lips. But the truth is, and that’s my great reason, I *can not* stay a’

when twa folk think the saam gate, it isna a good sign. 'I'm in love wi' you, and am determined to hae you,' says I.

" 'I winna hear a single word frae ane that's betraying his friend,' said she ;—'not one word, after your avowal to my father. If he hae ony private word, say it—and if no, good night.'

"Did she say that, the dear creature? Heaven bless her bonny face!"

" 'I did promise to a particular friend o' mine to speak a kind word for him,' said I. 'He is unco blate and modest, but there's no a better lad; and I never saw ane as deeply and as distractedly in love; for though I feel I *do* love, it is with reason and moderation.'

"There again!" cried Wat, who had begun to hold out his hand—"There again! Do you ca' that acting like a faithfu' friend?"

" 'Not a word of yourself,' said she. 'Who is this friend of yours! And has he any more to say by you? Not one word more of yourself—at least not to-night.'"

"At least not to-night!" repeated Wat, again and again—"Did she say that? I dinna like the addition ava."

"That was what she said; and naething could be plainer than that she was inviting me back; but as I was tied down, I was obliged to say something about

you. 'Ye ken Window Wat?' says I. 'He is o'er sight and judgment in love wi' you, and he comes here ance or twice every week, just for the pleasure o' seeing you through the window. He's a gay queer compost—for though he is a' soul, yet he wants spirit.'"

"Did ye ca' me a compost? That was rather a queer term, begging your pardon," observed Wat.

"'I hae seen the lad sometimes,' says she. 'If he came here to see me, he certainly need not be sae muckle ashamed of his errand as not to show his face. I think him a main saft ane.'

"'Ye're quite i' the wrang, lass,' says I. 'Wat's a great dab. He's an arithmeticker, a 'stronomer, a historian, and a grand poeter, and has made braw sangs about yoursell. What think ye o' being made a wife to sic a hero as him? Od help ye, it will raise ye as high as the moon.'"

"I'll tell ye what it is, Jock the Jewel—the niest time ye gang to court, court for yoursell; for a' that ye hae said about me is downright mockery, and it strikes me that you are baith a selfish knave and a gommeril. Sae good e'en t'ye for the present. I owe you a good turn for your kind offices down by. I'll speak for mysell in future, and do ye the same—*like friends, ye ken*—that's a' I say."

"If I speak for mysell, I ken wha will hae but a poor chance," cried Jock after him.

The next time our two shepherds met, it was in the identical smithy adjoining to Lowrie's Lodge, and that at six o'clock on a December evening. The smith looked exceedingly wise, and when he heard the two swains begin to cut and sneer at one another, it was delicate food for Vulcan. He puffed and blew at the bellows, and thumped at the stithy, and always between put in a disjointed word or two.—“Mae hunters! mae hunters for the Tod's bairns—hem, phoogh, phoogh—will be worried now!—phoogh”—thump, thump—“will be run down now—hem!”

“Are ye gaun far this way the night, Jewel, an ane may spier?”

“Far enough for you, Wat, I'm thinking. How has the praying been coming on this while bygone?”

“What d'ye mean, Mr Jewel? If ye will speak, let it no be in riddles. Rather speak nonsense, as ye used to do.”

“I am speaking in nae riddles, lad. I wat weel a' the country-side kens that ye hae been gaun learning prayers aff Hervey's Meditations, and crooning them o'er to yoursell in every cleuch o' the glen, a' to tame a young she-fox wi'.”

“And that ye hae been lying under the hands o' the moor doctor a month, and submitting to an operation, frae the effects o' somebody's potatoe-broo—isna that as weel kent?”

"Till't, lads, till't!" cried the smith—"that's the right way o' ganging to wark—phoogh!"—clink, clink—"pepper away!"—clink, clink—"soon be baith as het as nailstrings—phoogh!"

The mention of the potatoe-broo somewhat abated Jock's sarcastic humour, for he had suffered some inconvenience from the effects of it, and the circumstance had turned the laugh against him among his companions. Ere long he glided from the smithy, and after that Wat sat in the fidgets for fear his rival had effected a previous engagement with the Snaw-fleck. The smith, perceiving it, seized him in good-humour, and turned him out at the door. "Nae time to stay now, lad—nae time to wait here now. The hunt will be up, and the young Tod holed, if ye dinna make a' the better speed." Then, as Wat vanished down the way, the smith imitated the sound of the fox-hounds and the cries of the huntsmen. "Will be run down now, thae young Tods—heavy metal laid on now—we'll have a walding heat some night, an the track keep warm," said the smith, as he fell to the big bellows with both hands.

When Wat arrived at Lowrie's Lodge, he first came in contact with one wooer, and then another, hanging about the corners of the house; but finding that none of them was his neighbour and avowed rival, he hasted to his old quiet station at the back window, not the

window where the Jewel stood when he met with his mischance, but one right opposite to it. There he saw the three bonniest birds of the air surrounded with admirers, and the Jewel sitting cheek by cheek with the lovely Snaw-bird. The unbidden tears sprang to Wat's eyes, but it was not from jealousy, but from the most tender affection, as well as intense admiration, that they had their source. The other wooers that were lingering without, joined him at the window; and Wat feeling this an incumbrance, and eager to mar his rival's success, actually plucked up courage, and strode in amongst them all.

“How came the twa moorland chieles on at the courting the other night?”

“It's hard to say; there are various accounts about the matter.”

“What does the smith say?—for, though his sentences are but short, he says them loud enough, and often enough ower, and folks reckon there's aye some truth in the foundation.”

“I can tell ye what he says, for I heard him on the subject oftener than since, and his information was precisely as follows :—‘The Tod's bairns maun gang now, lads—I'm saying, the Tod's bairns maun gang now—eh, Menye?—fairly run down. Half-a-dozen tykes

ower sair for ae young Tod—eh? Fairly holed the young ane, it seems—I'm saying, the young ane's holed. Nought but a pick and shool wantit to howk her. Jewel has gi'en mouth there—I'm saying, auld Jewel has gi'en mouth there. Poor Wat has been obliged to turn to the auld ane—he's on the full track o' her—I'm saying, he's after her, full trot. But some thinks she'll turn her tail to a craig, and wear him up. It was Wat that got the honour o' the beuk, though—I'm saying, it was him that took the beuk—wan gloriously through, too. The saxteenth o' the Romans, without a hamp, hinny. Was that true, think ye?—I'm saying, think ye that was true? Cam to the holy kiss; a' the wooers' teeth watered—eh?—Think ye that was true, hinny? The Jewel was amaisht comed to grips at that verse about the kiss—eh?—I'm saying, the Jewel closed wi' the beauty there, I'm saying—Ha! ha!—I think that wadna be true.—This is the length the smith's information gangs.”

“I'm sure, gin the Snaw-fleck take the Jewel, in preference to Wat, it will show a strange perversion of taste.”

“O, there's naebody can answer for the fancies of a woman. But they're a geyan auld-farrant set the Tods, and winna be easily outwitted. Did ye no hear ought of a moonlight-match that was to be there?”

“Not a word; and if I had, I wadna hae believed it.”

“ The Jewel has been whispering something to that effect ; he’s sae uplifted, he canna hand his tongue ; and I dinna wonder at it. But, for a’ the offers the bonny lass had, that she should fix on him, is a miracle. Time tries a’ ; and Jock may be cheated yet.”

Yes, time is the great trier of human events. Let any man review his correspondences for ten years back, and he will then see how widely different his own prospects of the future have been from the lessons taught him by that hoary monitor Time. But, for the present, matters turned out as the fortunate wooer had insinuated ; for, in a short month after this confabulation had taken place, the auld Tod’s helpmate arose early one morning, and began a-bustling about the house in her usual busy way, and always now and then kept giving hints to her bonny lasses to rise and begin to their daily tasks.—“ Come, stir ye, stir ye, my bonny bairns. When the sterns o’ heaven hae gane to their beds, it is time the flowers o’ the yird war rising—Come, come ! —No stirring yet ?—Busk ye, busk ye, like thrifty bairns, and dinna let the lads say that ye are sleepie dowdies, that lie in your beds till the sun burns holes in your coverlets. Fie, fie !—There has been a reek i’ Jean Lowrie’s lum this half-hour. The moor-cock has crawled, the mawkin cowered, and the whaup yammered abune the flower. Streek your young limbs—open your young een—a foot on the cauld floor, and

sleep will soon be aboon the cluds.—Up, up, my winsome bairns !”

The white Lady-Seabird was soon afoot, for she slept by herself ; but the old dame still kept speaking away to the other two, at one time gibing, at another coaxing them to rise, but still there was no answer. “Peace be here, Helen, but this is an unco sleep-sleeping !” said she.—“What has been asteer owerneight ? I wish your twa titties haena been out wi’ the men ?”

“Ay, I wish they binna out wi’ them still ; for I heard them steal out yestreen, but I never heard them steal in again.”

The old wife ran to the bed, and in a moment was heard exclaiming,—“The sorrow be i’ my een gin ever I saw the like o’ that ! I declare the bed’s as cauld as a curling-stane !—Ay, the nest’s cauld, and the birds are flown. Oh, wae be to the day ! wae be to the day ! Gudeman, gudeman, get up and raise the parishen, for our bairns are baith stown away !”

“Stown away !” cried the father—“What does the woman mean ?”

“Ay, let them gang,” cried the son ; “they’re weel away, gin they bide.”

“Tewhoo ! hoo-hoo !” cried the daughter, weeping, —“That comes o’ your laws o’ Padanaram ! What had ye ado with auld Laban’s rules ? Ye might hae letten us gang aff as we could win.—There, I am left

to spin tow, wha might hae been married the first, had it no been for your daft laws o' Padanaram."

The girl cried, the son laughed, the old woman raved and danced through very despair, but the gude-man took the matter quite calmly, as if determined to wait the issue with resignation, for better or worse.

"Hand your tongues, ilk ane o' ye," said he—"What's a' the fy-gae-to about? I hae that muckle to trust to my lasses, that I can lippen them as weel out o' my sight as in my sight, and as weel wi' young men as wi' auld women. Bairns that are brought up in the fear, nurture, and admonition o' their Maker, will aye swee to the right side, and sae will mine. Gin they thought they had a right to choose for themselves, they war right in exercising that right; and I'm little feared that their choices be bad anes, or yet that they be contrary to my wishes. Sae I rede you to hand a' your tongues, and tak nae mair notice o' ought that has happened, than if it hadna been. We're a' in gude hands to guide us; and though we whiles pu' the reins out o' His hand to tak a gallop our ain gate, yet He winna leave us lang to our ain direction."

With these sagacious words, the auld sly Tod settled the clamour and outcry in his family that morning; and the country has never doubted to this day, that he plowed with his own heifers.

On the evening previous to this colloquy, the fami-

ly of the Tods went to rest at an early hour. There had been no wooers admitted that night ; and no sooner had the two old people begun to breathe deep, than the eldest and youngest girls, who slept in an apartment by themselves, and had every thing in readiness, eloped from their father's cot, the Eagle with a light-some heart and willing mind, but the younger with many fears and misgivings. For thus the matter stood : —Wat sighed and pined in love for the Snaw-fleck, but he was young and modest, and could not tell his mind ; but he was such a youth as a maiden would love,—handsome, respectable, and virtuous ; and a match with him was so likely, that no one ever supposed the girl would make objections to it. Jock, on the other hand, was nearly twice her age, talkative, forward, and self-conceited ; and, it was thought, rather wanted to win the girl for a brag, than for any great love he bore her. But Jock was rich ; and when one has told that, he has told enough. In short, the admired, the young, the modest, and reserved Snaw-fleck, in order to get quit of her father's laws of Padanaram, agreed to make a run-away marriage with Jock the Jewel. But what was far more extraordinary, her youthful lover agreed to accompany her as bridesman, and, on that account, it may possibly be supposed, her eldest sister never objected to accompany her as maid.

The shepherds had each of them provided himself with a good horse, saddle, and pillion ; and, as the custom is, the intended bride was committed to the care of the best-man, and the Eagle was mounted behind her brother-in-law that was to be. It was agreed, before mounting, that in case of their being parted in the dark by a pursuit, or any other accident, their place of rendezvous was to be at the Golden Harrow, in the Candlemaker-Row, towards which they were to make with all speed.

They had a wild moorland path to traverse for some space, on which there were a multiplicity of tracks, but no definitive road. The night was dark and chill, and, on such ground, the bride was obliged to ride constantly with her right hand round Wat's waist, and Wat was obliged to press that hand to his bosom, for fear of its being cold ; and in the excess of his politeness he magnified the intemperance of the night at least seven-fold. When pressing that fair hand to his bosom, Wat sometimes thought to himself, what a hard matter it was that it should so soon be given away to another ; and then he wiped a tear from his eye, and did not speak again for a good while. Now the night, as was said, being very dark, and the bride having made a pleasant remark, Wat spontaneously lifted that dear hand from his bosom, in order to attempt passing it to his lips, but (as he told me himself) without the small-

est hope of being permitted. But behold, the gentle ravishment was never resisted! On the contrary, as Wat replaced the insulted hand in his bosom, he felt the pressure of his hand gently returned.

Wat was confounded, electrified! and felt as the scalp of his head had been contracting to a point. He felt, in one moment, as if there had been a new existence sprung up within him, a new motive for life, and for every great and good action; and, without any express aim, he felt a disposition to push onward. His horse soon began to partake of his rider's buoyancy of spirits, (which a horse always does,) so he cocked up his ears, mended his pace, and, in a short time, was far a-head of the heavy, stagnant-blooded beast on which the Jewel bridegroom and his buxom Eagle rode. She had *her* right arm round *his* waist too, of course; but her hand lacked the exhilarating qualities of her lovely sister's; and yet one would have thought that the Eagle's looks were superior to those of most young girls outgone thirty.

"I wish thae young fools wad take time and ride at leisure; we'll lose them on this black moor a'thegither, and then it is a question how we may foregather again," said the bridegroom; at the same time making his hazel sapling play yerk on the hind-quarters of his nag. "Gin the gowk let aught happen to that bit lassie o' mine under cloud o' night, it wad be a' ower wi' me—I could

never get aboon that. There are some things, ye ken, Mrs Eagle, for a' your sneering, that a man can never get aboon."

"No very mony o' them, gin a chield hae ony spirit," returned the Eagle. "Take ye time, and take a little care o' your ain neck and mine. Let them gang their gates. Gin Wat binna tired o' her, and glad to get quat o' her, or they win to the Ports o' Edinburgh, I hae tint my computation."

"Na, if he takes care o' *her*, that's a' my dread," rejoined he, and at the same time kicked viciously with both heels, and applied the sapling with great vigour. But "the mair haste the waur speed" is a true proverb; for the horse, instead of mending his pace, slackened it, and absolutely grew so frightened for the gutters on the moor, that he would hardly be persuaded to take *one* of them, even though the sapling sounded loud and thick on his far loin. He tried this ford, and the other ford, and smelled and smelled with long-drawn breathings. "Ay, ye may snuff!" cried Jock, losing all patience; "the deil that ye had ever been foaled!—Hilloa! Wat Scott, where are ye?"

"Hush, hush, for gude's sake," cried the Eagle; "ye'll raise the country, and put a' out thegither."

They listened for Wat's answer, and at length heard a far-away whistle. The Jewel grew like a man half distracted, and in spite of the Eagle's remonstrances,

thrashed on his horse, cursed him, and bellowed out still the more; for he suspected what was the case, that, owing to the turnings and windings of his horse among the hags, he had lost his aim altogether, and knew not which way he went. Heavens! what a stentorian voice he sent through the moor before him! but he was only answered by the distant whistle, that still went farther and farther away.

When the bride heard these loud cries of desperation so far behind, and in a wrong direction, she was mightily tickled, and laughed so much that she could hardly keep her seat on the horse; at the same time, she continued urging Wat to ride, and he, seeing her so much amused and delighted at the embarrassment of her betrothed and sister, humoured her with equal good-will, rode off, and soon lost all hearing of the unfortunate bridegroom. They came to the high-road at Middleton, cantered on, and reached Edinburgh by break of day, laughing all the way at their unfortunate companions. Instead, however, of putting up at the Golden Harrow, in order to render the bridegroom's embarrassment still more complete, at the bride's suggestion, they went to a different corner of the city, namely, to the White Horse, Canongate. There the two spent the morning; Wat as much embarrassed as any man could be, but his lovely companion quite delighted at the thoughts of *what* Jock and her sister *would do*. Wat could not understand her

for his life, and he conceived that she did not understand herself; but perhaps Wat Scott was mistaken. They breakfasted together; but for all their long and fatiguing journey, neither of them seemed disposed to eat. At length Wat ventured to say, "We'll be obliged to gang to the Harrow, and see what's become o' our friends."

"O no, no! by no means!" cried she fervently; "I would not, for all the world, relieve them from such a delightful scrape. What the two *will do* is beyond my comprehension."

"If ye want just to bamboozle them a'thegither, the best way to do that is for you and me to marry," said Wat, "and leave them twa to shift for themselves."

"O that wad be so grand!" said she.

Though this was the thing nearest to honest Wat's heart of all things in the world, he only made the proposal by way of joke, and as such he supposed himself answered. Nevertheless, the answer made the hairs of his head creep once more. "My truly, but that wad gar our friend Jock loup twa gates at ance!" rejoined Wat.

"It wad be the grandest trick that ever was played upon man," said she.

"It wad mak an awfu' sound in the country," said Wat.

"It wad gang through the twa shires like a hand-bell," said she.

"Od, I really think it is worth our while to try't," said he.

"O by a' manner o' means!" cried she, clasping her hands together for joy.

Wat's breath cut short, and his visage began to alter. He was likely to acquire the blessing of a wife rather more suddenly than he anticipated, and he began to wish that the girl might be in her perfect senses. "My dear M—," said he, "are you serious? would you really consent to marry me?"

"Would I consent to marry you!" reiterated she. "That is siccan a question to speer!"

"It is a question," said Wat, "and I think a very natural ane."

"Ay, it is a question, to be sure," said she; "but it is ane that ye ken ye needna hae put to me to answer, at least till ye had tauld me whether ye wad marry me or no."

"Yes, faith, I will—there's my hand on it," eagerly exclaimed Wat. "Now, what say ye?"

"No," said she;—"that is, I mean—yes."

"I wonder ye war sae lang o' thinking about that," said Wat. "Ye ought surely to hae tauld me sooner."

"Sae I wad, if ever ye had speered the question," said she.

"What a stupid idiot I was!" exclaimed Wat, and rapped on the floor with his stick for the landlord. "An it be your will, sir, we want a minister," says Wat.

"There's one in the house, sir," said the landlord, chuckling with joy at the prospect of some fun. "Keep a daily chaplain here—Thirlstane's motto, 'Aye ready.' Could ye no contrive to do without him?"

"Na, na, sir, we're folk frae the country," said Wat; "we hae comed far and foul gate for a preevat but honest hand-fasting."

"Quite right, quite right," said my landlord. "Never saw a more comely country couple. Your business is done for you at once;" at the same time he tapped on the hollow of his hand, as much as to say, some reward must be forthcoming. In a few minutes he returned, and setting the one cheek in at the side of the door, said, with great rapidity, "Could not contrive to do without the minister, then? Better?—no getting off again. Better?—what?—Can't do without him?"

"O no, sir," said Wat, who was beginning a long explanatory speech, but my landlord cut him short, by introducing a right reverend divine, more than half-seas over. He was a neat, well-powdered, cheerful little old gentleman, but one who never asked any farther warrant for the marrying of a couple, than the full consent of parties. About this he was very particular,

and advised them, in strong set phrases, to beware of entering rashly into that state ordained for the happiness of mankind. Wat thought he was advising him against the match, but told him he was very particularly situated. Parties soon came to a right understanding, the match was made, the minister had his fee, and afterwards he and the landlord invited themselves to the honour, and very particular pleasure, of dining with the young couple at two.

What has become of Jock the Jewel and his partner all this while? We left them stabled in a mossy moor, surrounded with haggs, and bogs, and mires, every one of which would have taken a horse over the back; at least so Jock's great strong plough-horse supposed, for he became so terrified that he absolutely refused to take one of them. Now, Jock's horse happened to be wrong, for I know the moor very well, and there is not a bog on it all, that will hold a horse still. But it was the same thing in effect to Jock and the Eagle—the horse would have gone eastward or westward along and along and along the sides of these little dark stripes, which he mistook for tremendous quagmires; or if Jock would have suffered him to turn his head homeward, he would, as Jock said, have galloped for joy; but northwards towards Edinburgh, never a step would he proceed. Jock thrashed him at one time, stroked his mane at another, at one time

coaxed, at another cursed him, till, ultimately, on the horse trying to force his head homeward in spite of Jock, the latter, in high wrath, struck him a blow on the far ear with all his might. This had the effect of making the animal take the motion of a horizontal wheel, or millstone. The weight of the riders fell naturally to the outer side of the circle—Jock held by the saddle, and the Eagle held by Jock—till down came the whole concern with a thump on the moss. “I daresay, that beast’s gane mad the night,” said Jock; and, rising, he made a spring at the bridle, for the horse continued still to reel; but, in the dark, our hero missed his hold—off went the horse, like an arrow out of a bow, and left our hapless couple in the midst of a black moor.

“What shall we do now?—shall we turn back?” said Jock.

“Turn back!” said the Eagle; “certainly not, unless you hae ta’en the rue.”

“I wasna thinking o’ that ava,” said he; “but, O, it is an unfortunate-like business—I dinna like their leaving o’ us, nor can I ken what’s their meaning.”

“They war fear’d for being caught, owing to the noise that you were making,” said she.

“And wha wad hae been the loser gin we had been caught? I think the loss then wad hae faun on me,” said Jock.

"We'll come better speed wanting the beast," said she; "I wadna wonder that we are in Edinburgh afore them yet."

Wearied and splashed with mud, the two arrived at the sign of the Harrow, a little after noon, and instantly made inquiries for the bride and best-man. A description of one man answers well enough for another to people quite indifferent. Such a country gentleman as the one described, the landlady said, had called twice in the course of the day, and looked into several rooms, without leaving his name. They were both *sure* it was Wat, and rested content. The gentleman came *not* back, so Jock and the Eagle sat and looked at one another. "They will be looking at the grand things o' this grand town," said she.

"Ay, maybe," said Jock, in manifest discontent. "I couldna say what they may be looking at, or what they may be doing. When folks gang ower the march to be married, they should gang by themselves twa. But some wadna be tauld sae."

"I canna comprehend where he has ta'en my sister to, or what he's doing wi' her a' this time," said the Eagle.

"I couldna say," said Jock, his chagrin still increasing, a disposition which his companion took care to cherish, by throwing out hints and insinuations that kept him constantly in the fidgets; and he seemed to

be repenting heartily of the step he had taken. A late hour arrived, and the two, having had a sleepless night and a toilsome day, ordered supper, and apartments for the night. They had not yet sat down to supper, when the landlord requested permission for two gentlemen, acquaintances of his, to take a glass together in the same room with our two friends, which being readily granted, who should enter but the identical landlord and parson who had so opportunely buckled the other couple ! They had dined with Wat and his bride, and the whisky-toddy had elicited the whole secret from the happy bridegroom. The old gentlemen were highly tickled with the oddity of the adventure, and particularly with the whimsical situation of the pair at the Harrow ; and away they went at length on a reconnoitring expedition, having previously settled the measures to be pursued.

My landlord of the White Horse soon introduced himself to the good graces of the hapless couple by his affability, jokes, quips, and quibbles, and Jock and he were soon as intimate as brothers, and the maid and he as sweethearts, or old intimate acquaintance. He commended her as the most beautiful, handsome, courteous, and accomplished country lady he ever had seen in his life, and at length asked Jock if the lady was his sister. No, she was not. Some near relation, perhaps, that he had the charge of.—No.—“ Oh ! Beg pardon—per-

ceive very well—plain—evident—wonder at my blindness,” said my landlord of the White Horse—“sweetheart—sweetheart? Hope ’tis to be a match? Not take back such a flower to the wilderness unplucked—unappropriated that is—to blush unseen—waste sweetness on the desert air? What? Hope so? Eh? More sense than that, I hope?”

“You mistak, sir; you mistak. My case is a very particular ane,” said Jock.

“I wish it were mine, though,” said he of the White Horse.

“Pray, sir, are you a married man?” said the Eagle.

“Married? Oh yes, mim, married, and settled in life, with a White Horse,” returned he.

“A grey mare, you mean,” said the Eagle.

“Excellent! superlative!” exclaimed my landlord. “Minister, what think you of that? I’m snubbed—cut down—shorn to the quick! Delightful girl! something favoured like the young country bride we dined with to-day. What say you, minister? Prettier, though—decidedly prettier. More animation, too. Girls from the same country-side have always a resemblance.”

“Sir, did you say you dined with a bride from our country-side?” said Jock.

“Did so—did so.”

“What was the bridegroom like?”

“A soft-soles—milk-and-water.”

it. My landlord gave the preference to the Eagle in every accomplishment. Jock's heart grew mellow, while the maid blushed and wept ; and in short, they went to bed that night a married couple, to the great joy of the Eagle's heart ; for it was never once doubted that the whole scheme was a contrivance of her own—a bold stroke to get hold of the man with the money. She knew Wat would marry her sister at a word or hint, and then the Jewel had scarcely an alternative. He took the disappointment and affront so much to heart, that he removed with his Eagle to America, at the Whitsunday following, where their success was beyond anticipation, and where they were both living at an advanced age about twelve years ago, without any surviving family.

CHAPTER II.

A STRANGE SECRET.

SOME years ago, a poor man named Thomas Henderson came to me, and presented me with a letter from a valued friend. I showed some little kindness to the man; and as an acknowledgment, he gave me an account of himself, in that plain, simple, and drawling style, which removed all doubts of its authenticity. His story, as a whole, was one of very deep interest to himself, no doubt, but of very little to me, as it would be to the world at large if it were repeated; but as one will rarely listen to even the most common-place individual without hearing something to reward the attention bestowed upon him, so there was one incident in this man Henderson's life which excited my curiosity very much. I shall give it nearly in his own words:—

I was nine years a servant to the Earl of —, (said he,) and when I left him, he made me a handsome present; but it was on condition that I should never again

come within a hundred miles of his house. The truth is, that I would have been there to this day, had I not chanced to come at the knowledge of something relating to the family that I ought not to have known, and which I never would have known, had I gotten my own will. When the auld Earl died, there was an unco confusion, and at length the young Lord came hame frae abroad, and take the command. He hadna been master about twa years when he rings the bell ae morning, and sends for me. I was merely a groom, and no used to gang up stairs to my Lord; but he often spoke to me in the stables, for I had the charge o' his favourites Cleopatra and Venus, and I thought he wanted to gie me some directions about them. Weel, up the stair I riss, wanting the jacket and bonnet, and I opens the door, and I says, "What is't, my Lord?"—"Shut the door, and come in," says he. Hech! what in the world is in the wind, now! thinks I. Am I gann to be made some grand-secreter?

"Tom, has the Lady Julia ordered the coach to-day?" says he.

"I believe she has, my Lord, I think Hector was saying so."

"And is it still to the old spot again, in the forest?"

"That whaur he keep'd till Hector is on the seat."

But there is little doubt, that it is to the same place. She never drives to any other."

"Tom, I was long absent from home, but you have been in the family all the while, and must know all its secrets—What is it supposed my sister Julia has always ado with the forester's wife at the shieling of Aberduchra?"

"That has never been kenn'd to ane o' us, my Lord. But it is supposed there is some secret business connected wi' her visits there."

"That is a great stretch of supposition, indeed, Tom! Of that there can be no doubt. But what do the servants suppose the secret relates to? Or what do you suppose concerning it? Come, tell me honestly and freely."

"Ou, naebody kens that, my Lord; for Lady Julia just lights at a certain point o' the road, and orders the coach to be there again at a certain hour at night; and that's a' that has ever been kenn'd about it. But we a' notice that Lady Julia is sair altered. And folk say—*but as to that I am ignorant—they say, ye ken, that auld Eppie Cowan's a witch.*"

"And that it is on some business of enchantment or divination that my sister goes to her?"

"Na, na, I dinna say that, my Lord; for a' that I say is just this, that I believe naebody in this world, excepting Lady Julia and auld Eppie themsells twa, kens what their business is thegither, or how they came to be connected."

"Well, well, Tom, that is what I want particularly to know. Do you set out just now; go over the shoulder of Binnry-Veel, and through Glen-Ellich, by the straight route; get to Aberdackra; before my sister; conceal yourself somewhere, in the house or out of the house, in a thicket or in a tree; note all that you see Lady Julia engaged in—who meets her there—what they do, and what they say, and bring me a true report of every thing; and your reward shall be according to your success."

"Weel, aff I rine, and over the hills at the nearest, and sair wark had I afore I got mysell concealed; for auld Boppie was running out and in, and in and out again, in an unce fyke, weel kenning wha was to be her visiter that day; for every time she cam to the door she gas a lang look down the glen, and then a' round about her, as if feared for being catched in a fault."

"I had by this time got up to the top of a great alder tree that almost overlooked the door o' the shieling; but when I saw the auld reudess looking about her so sternly, I grew frightened; for I thought, if she be a witch, I shall soon be discovered; and then, should she cast any contrips that may dumfounder me, or should I see aught to put me beside mysell, what a fa' I will get! I wad now has gien a' the claes on my back to have been safe down again, and had begun to study a quick descent; when I perceived Lady Julia coming rapidly

up the glen, with manifest trepidation in her manner. My heart began now to quake like an aspen leaf, for I suspected that some awesome scene was gann to be transacted, that could bring the accomplished Lady Julia to that wild retired spot. And yet when she drew near, her modest mien and fading beauty were so unlike any thing wicked or hellish, that—in short I did not know what to think or what to fear, but I had a considerable allowance o' baith.

With many kind and obsequious courtesies did old Eppie receive the lady on the green, and after exchanging a few words, they both vanished into the cottage, and shut the door. Now, thinks I, the infernal work will begin; but goodness be thankit, I'll see none o't frae here.—I changed my place on the tree, however, and came as near to the top of the lum as the branches would carry me. From thence I heard the voices of the twa, but knew not what they were saying. The Lady Julia's voice was seldom heard, but when it was, it had the sounds of agony; and I certainly thought she was imploring the old hag to desist from something which the other persisted in. The voice of the latter never ceased; it went on with one continued mumble, like the sound of a distant waterfall. The sounds still increased, and I sometimes made myself believe that I heard the voice of a third person. I cannot tell what I would then have given to have heard what was going

on, but though I strained my hearing to the uttermost, I could not attain it.

At length, all at once, I heard a piercing shriek, which was followed by low stifled moanings. "They are murdering a bairn, and what *will* I do!" said I to myself, sobbing till my heart was like to burst. And finding that I was just upon the point of losing my senses, as well as my hold, and falling from the tree, I descended with all expedition, and straightway ran and hid mysell under the bank of the burn behind the house, that thereby I might avoid hearing the cries of the suffering innocent, and secure myself from a fall.

Now, here shall be my watch, thinks I; for here I can see every ane that passes out frae or into the house; and as for what is gaun on in the inside, that's mair than I'll meddle wi'.

I had got a nice situation now, and a safe ane, for there was a thick natural hedge of briers, broom, and brambles, down the back o' the kail-yard. These overhung the burn-brae, so that I could hide mysell frae every human ee in case of great danger, and there was an opening in the hedge, through which I could see all that passed, and there I cowered down on my knees, and lay wi' my een stelled on that shieling o' sin and iniquity.

I hadna lain lang in this position till out comes the twasome, cheek for chowe, and the auld ane had a cof-

an under her arm ; and straight on they comes for the very opening o' the hedge where I was lying. Now, thinks I, I'm a gone man ; for in below this very bank where I am sitting, are they coming to hide the corpse o' the poor bairn, and here ten might lie till they consumed, unkenn'd to the hail world. Ay, here they are coming, indeed, for there is not another bit in the whole thicket where they can win through ; and in half a minute, I will have the witch and the murderess baith hanging at my throat like twa wullcats !—I was since just setting a' my joints to make a clean splash down the middle of the burn like an otter ; but the power was denied me, and a' that I could do, was to draw mysell close into my cove, like a hare into her form ; and there I sat and heard the following dialogue, and I think I remember it every word.

“ Now, my good Eppie, are you certain that no person will come upon us, or within view of us, before we have done ?” (*Good Eppie ! thinks I, Heaven preserve us a' frae sic goodness !*)

“ Ay, ay, weel am I sure o' that, Leddy July, for my ain goodman is on the watch, and he has a signal that I ken, which will warn us in good time if ony body leave the high-way.”

“ Then open the lid, and let me look into it once more ; for the poor inanimate remains that are in that chest have a hold of this disconsolate and broken heart,

which nothing else in this world can ever have again. O my dear boy! My comely, my beautiful, my murdered boy!"

Here Lady Julia burst into the most violent and passionate grief, shrieking and weeping like one in distraction. I was terrified out o' a' bounds; but I couldna help thinking to mysell what a strange inconsistent creature a woman was, first to take away a dear little boy's life, and then rair and scaugh over what she had done, like a madwoman! Her passion was sae violent and sae loud that I couldna take up what the auld crone was saying, although her tongue never lay for a moment; but I thought a' the time that she was trying to pacify and comfort Lady Julia; and I thought I heard her saying that the boy wasna murdered. Now, thinks I, that dings a' that ever I heard! If a man tince understands a woman, he needna be feared to try ought in nature!

"Now here they are, my Leddy July, just as your own fair hands laid them. There's no ane o' them out o' its place yet. There they a' lie, little and muckle, frae the crown o' the head to the soles o' the feet."

"Gude fergie the woman!" says I to mysell—"Can these be the banes o' bairns that she is speaking about? It is a question how mony has been put into that black kist afore this time, and there their banes will be lying,

tier aboon tier, like the contents of a candlemaker's box!"

"Look, here is the first, my Leddy. This is the first year's anes. Then, below that sheet o' silver paper, is the second year's, and on sae to the third and the fourth."

I didna think there had been as muckle wickedness in human nature, thought I; but if thae twa escape out o' this world without some veesible judgment, I'm unco sair misteen!

"Come now, Leddy July, and let us gae through them a' regularly; and gie ower greeting. See, as I said, this contains the first year's suits of a' kinds, and here, amang others, is the frock he was bapteezed in, far, far frae here. Ay, weel I mind that day, and sae may ye, Leddy July; when the Bishop flung the water on your boy's face, how the little chub looked at him! Ech—ech—ech—I'll never forget it! He didna whimper and whine, like ither bairns, but his little arms gae a quiver wi' anger, and sic a look as he gae the priest! Ay, it was as plain as he had said it in gude Scots, 'Billy, I'll be about wi' you for this yet!' He—he—he—my brave boy! Ay, there needed nae confessions, nor parish registers, to declare wha was his father! 'Faith, billy, I'll be about wi' you for this insult!' He—he—he! That was what he thought plainly enough, and he looked *very* angry at the Bishop the haill night.—O fie, Leddy July, dinna stain the bonny

frock wi' your tears. Troth, they are sae warm and sae sant, that they will never wash out again. There now, there now. We will hing them a' out to the sun ane by ane."

Shame fa' my stupidity! thought I to myself. Is the hail terrible affair endit in a bichel o' baby-clouts? —I then heard that they were moving farther away from me, and ventured to peep through the boughs, and saw the coffin standing open, about three feet from my nose. It was a small low trunk, covered with green velvet, lined with white satin, and filled with clothes that had belonged to a princely boy, who, it appeared from what I overheard, had either been privately murdered, or stolen away, or had somehow unaccountably disappeared. This I gathered from the parts of the dialogue that reached me, for always when they came near to the trunk, they were close beside me, and I heard every word; but as they went farther away, hanging out the bairn's claes to air, I lost the parts between. Auld Eppie spake without intermission, but Lady Julia did little else save cry, and weet the different parts of the dress with tears. It was excessively affecting to see the bonny young lady, wha was the flower o' the hail country, bending ower a wheen claes, pressing them to her bosom, and greeting till the very heart within her was like to melt, and aye crying, between every fit o' sobbing, "O my boy, my dear boy! my

noble, my beautiful boy! How my soul yearns after thee! Oh, Eppie, may you never know what it is to have but one only son, and to be bereaved of him in such a way as I have been!"

At one time I heard the old wife say, "See, here is the silk corset that he wore next his breast that very day;" on which the Lady Julia seized the little tucker, and kissed it an hundred times, and then said, "Since it once was warmed in his dear little bosom, it shall never cool again as long as his mother's is warm." So saying, she placed the relic in her breast, weeping bitterly.

Eppie's anecdotes of the boy were without end; the bereaved and beautiful mother often rebuking her, but all the while manifestly indulging in a painful pleasure. She showed her a pair of trowsers that were discoloured, and added, "Ah, I ken brawly what made them see dim. His foster-brother, Ranald, and he were after a fine painted butterfly one day. The creature took across a mire, a perfect stank. Ranald stopped short, but Lewis made a bauld spring to clear it. He hardly was by the middle, where he stuck up to the waist in mire. Afore my goodman reached him, there was naething aboon but the blue bonnet and the feather. 'You little imp, how gat you in there?' said my husband. 'That's not your concern, sir, but how I shall get out again,' said the little pestilence. Ah, he was the bairn

that had the kind heart when kindness was shown to him ; but no ae thing in this 'versal world wad he do by compulsion. We could never make him comprehend the power of death ; he always bit his lip, and scowled wi' his eebrows, as if determined to resist it. At first he held him at defiance, threatening to shoot or run him through the body ; but when checked so that he durst not openly defy him, his resolution was evidently unchanged. Ha ! he was the gallant boy ; and if he lives to be a man, he winna have his match in the three kingdoms."

" Alack, alack, my dear boy," exclaimed Lady Julia ; " his beauty is long ago defaced, his princely form decayed, and his little unripe bones lie mouldering in some pit or concealed grave. Perhaps he was flung from these rocks, and his fair and mangled form became the prey of the raven or the eagle."

The lady's vehemence some way affected my heart, and raised siccan a disposition in me to join her in crying, that in spite o' my heart, I fell a-fuffing like a goose as I was, in below the burn-brae. I was overheard ; and then all was silence and consternation for about the space of a minute, till I hears Eppie say, " Did you hear that, Leddy July ? What say ye ? What in the world was that ? I wish there may be nae concealed spies. I hope nae unhallowed ee has seen our wark the day, or unblest ear heard our words ! Eh ?

Neck butt, neck ben,
I find the smell o' quick men;
But be he living or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to mix my bread."

So saying, the old hag in one moment rushed through the thin part of the brake, by a retrograde motion, and drapping down from the hanging bank, she lighted precisely with a foot on each side of my neck. I tried to withdraw my head quietly and peaceably, but she held me as if my head had been in a vice, and, with the most unearthly yells, called out for a knife! a knife! I had now no other resource left but to make a tremendous bolt forward, by which I easily overturned the old dame, and off I ran plash for plash down the burn, till I came to an opening, by which I reached the only path down the glen. I had lost my bonnet, but got off with my head, which was more than the roudies intended.

Such screaming and howling as the two carried on behind me, I never heard. Their grand secret was now out; and I suppose they looked upon the discovery as utter ruin, for both of them knew me perfectly well, and guessed by whom I had been sent. I made the best of my way home, where I arrived before dark, and gave my master, the Earl, a full and faithful account of all that I had seen and all that I had heard. He said not a word until I had ended, but his face grew dark, and his eyes as red as a coal, and I easily perceived that he repented having sent me. When I had

concluded my narrative, he bit his lip for some time, and then said, in a low smothered voice,—“ I see how it has been—I see how it has been ; I understand it all perfectly well.” Then, after a short pause, he continued, “ I believe, Tom, it will be unsafe for you to stay longer here ; for, if you do, you will not be alive till to-morrow at midnight. Therefore haste to the south, and never for your life come north of the Tweed again, or you are a dead man, depend on that. If you promise me this, I will make you a present of L.10, over and above your wages ; but if you refuse, I will take my chance of having your motions watched, and you may take yours.”

As I had often heard hints that certain officious people had vanished from my Lord's mansion before this time, I was glad to make my escape ; and taking him at his offer, I was conveyed on shipboard that same night, and have never again looked towards the north.

“ It is a great pity, Thomas,” said I, when he had finished this recital, “ that you can give me no account of the boy—whose son he was, or what became of him. Was Lady Julia ever married ?”

I couldna say, sir. I never heard it said either that she was married, or that she was not married. I never had the slightest suspicion that she was married till that day ; but I certainly believe sinsyne, that she since *had* been married at ony rate. Last year I met with one John Ferguson from that country, who told me the

Earl was dead, and that there was some dispute about the heirship, and that some strange secrets had come out ; and he added, " For you know very weel, Thomas, that that family never could do any thing like other people."

" Think you there is no person in that country to whom I could apply," said I, " for a developement of these mysterious circumstances?"

" There is only one person," said Henderson, " and I am sure he knows every thing about it, and that is the Bishop ; for he was almost constantly in the family, was sent for on every emergency, and was often away on long jaunts with Lady Julia alone. I am sure he can inform you of every circumstance ; but then it is almost certain either that he will not dare, or that he will not choose, to disclose them."

This story of Henderson's made so strong an impression upon me that I could not refrain from addressing a letter to the Bishop, requesting, in as polite terms as I could, an explanation of the events to which it referred. I was not aware that the reverend prelate had been in any way personally connected with the events referred to, nor did his answer expressly admit that he was ; but I could gather from it, that he had a very intimate share in them, and was highly offended at the

liberty I had taken, upon an acquaintance that was certainly slight, of addressing him on the subject. I was sorry that I should have inadvertently disturbed his reverence's equanimity, for his reply betrayed a good deal of angry feeling ; and as in it he took the trouble of entering at some length into a defence of the Roman Catholic religion, against which I had made no insinuation, nor even once referred to it, I suspected that there had been something wrong, and, more and more resolved to get to the bottom of the affair, I next wrote to the Protestant clergyman of the place. His reply informed me that it was altogether out of his power to furnish the information desired, inasmuch as he had come to the pastoral charge of his parish many years subsequently to the period alluded to ; and the Earl of ——'s family being Catholic, he had no intercourse with them. It was considered unsafe to meddle with them, he said ; they had the reputation of being a dangerous race, and, interfering with no man's affairs, allowed no interference with theirs. In conclusion, however, my reverend correspondent referred me to a Mr Mac-Tavish, tenant of Innismore, as one who possessed more knowledge concerning the Earl's family than any one out of it. This person, he farther stated, was seventy years of age, and had lived in the district all his life, though the late Earl tried every means to remove him.

Availing myself of this clew, I made it my business

to address Mr MacTavish in such a way as was most likely to ensure compliance with my wishes. I was at some pains to procure introductions, and establish a sort of acquaintance with him, and at last succeeded in gaining a detail of the circumstances, in so far as he knew them, connected with the adventure of Henderson at the shieling of Aberduchra. This detail was given me in a series of letters of different dates, and many of them at long intervals from each other, which I shall take the liberty of throwing into a continuous narrative, retaining, however, the old gentleman's own way of telling the story.

About the time when the French were all to be killed in Lochaber (Mr MacTavish's narrative commences), I was employed in raising the militia soldiers, and so had often to make excursions through the country, both by night and day. One morning, before dawn, as I was riding up the Clunie side of the river, I was alarmed by perceiving a huge black body moving along the road before me. I knew very well that it was the Bogle of Glastulochan, and kept at a respectful distance behind it. After I had ridden a considerable way in great terror, but yet not daring to turn and fly, the light became more and more clear, and the size of the apparition decreased, and, from a huge undefined mass, as-

sumed sundry shapes, which made it evident that it meditated an attack on me, or, as I had some faint hopes, to evanish altogether. To attempt to fly from a spirit I knew to be needless, so I held on my way, in great perturbation. At last, as the apparition mounted an eminence over which the road winded, and so came more distinctly between me and the light, I discovered that it was two persons on horseback, travelling the same way as myself. On coming up, I recognised the Popish Bishop accompanied by the most beautiful young lady I had ever seen.

"Good morrow to you, pretty lady, and to you, reverend sir," said I; but not one of them answered a word. The lady, however, gazed intently at me, as if she expected I had been some other, while the Bishop seemed greatly incensed, and never once turned round his head. I cannot tell how it was, but I became all at once greatly in love with the lady, and resolved not to part till I discovered who she was. So when we came to the house of Robert MacNab, I said, "Madam, do you cross the corrie to-day?"

"No," said she.

"Then I shall stay on this side too," said I.

"Young soldier, we desire to be alone," said the Bishop, (and this was the first time he had spoken,) "therefore be pleased to take your own way, and to free us of your company."

"By no means," said I; "neither the lady nor your Reverence can be the worse of my protection."

When I said "your Reverence," the Bishop started, and stared me in the face; and after a long pause, once more desired me to leave them. I would not do so, however, although I must acknowledge my behaviour was exceedingly improper; but I was under the influence of a strange fascination at the time, which I am the more convinced of now that I know the events that have followed upon that rencounter.

"We travel by the Spean," said he.

"It is the nearest way," I replied, "and I shall go that way too." The Bishop then became very angry, and I, I must confess, more and more impertinent. "I know better," said I, "than to trust a Popish priest with such a lovely and beautiful, and amiable dear lady in such a wild and lonely place. I bear his Majesty's commission, and it is my duty to protect all the ladies that are his true subjects." This was taking a good deal upon me, but I thought I perceived that the Bishop had an abashed look, as if detected in an affair he was ashamed of; and so I determined to see the end of it. We travelled together till we arrived at Fort William, where we were met by a gallant gentleman, who took the lady from her horse, and kissed her, and made many fine speeches; and she wept, and suffered herself to be led away towards the beach. I went with them, and

there being a great stir at the shore, and fearing that they were going to take the lady on board by force, I drew my sword, and advancing to the gentleman, commanded him not to take the lady on board against her will, adding, that she was under my protection.

"Is she indeed, sir?" said he. "And pray may I ask to whom she is indebted for this kind and gratuitous protection?"

"That is to myself, sir," said I.

He pushed me aside in high disdain, and as I continued to show a disposition to oppose by force his purpose of taking the lady on board, I was surrounded by nine or ten fellows who were in readiness to act upon his orders; they disarmed me, and persuading the spectators that I was insane or intoxicated, bound me, as the only means of preventing me from annoying their master. The whole party then went on board, and sailed down the frith; and I saw no more of them, nor discovered any more concerning the lady at that time.

Soon after this adventure, the Bishop returned home, but whenever he saw my face, he looked as if he had seen a serpent ready to spring on him. Many a sore and heavy heart I had about the lady that I saw fallen among the Papiets, and carried away by them; but for a long while I remained in ignorance who she was, being only able to conjecture that she was some young

woman about to be made a nun, contrary to her own inclination.

At length a fearful report began to spread through the country of the loss of Lady Julia, and of her having been last seen in the company of her confessor; but the Bishop frequented the Castle the same as before, and therefore people shook their heads whenever the subject was mentioned, as if much were suspected, though little durst be said. I wondered greatly if that lady with whom I fell so much in love in our passage through the Highlands, could have been this Lady Julia. My father died that year, so I left the regiment in which I had been an officer, and being in Glasgow about the end of September, I went from thence in a vessel to Fort-William. As we passed the island of Illimore, a lady came on board rather in a secret manner. She had a maid-servant with her, who carried a child. The moment the lady stepped up the ship's side, I perceived it to be the identical beautiful creature with whom I had fallen in the year before, when the Bishop was carrying her away. But what a change had taken place in her appearance! her countenance was pale and emaciated, her looks dejected, and she seemed to be heart-broken. At our first encounter, she looked me full in the face, and I saw that she recognised me, for she hurried past me into the cabin, followed by her maid.

When we came to the fortress, and were paying our fares, I observed some dispute between the lady and the mate or master of the boat and a West-Islander, the one charging her for boat-fare, and the other for board and lodging. "I give you my word of honour," she said, "that you shall be paid double your demands in two weeks; but at present I have no means of satisfying you."

"Words of honour won't pass current here, mistress," said the sailor; "money or value I must have, for I am but a servant."

The West-Islander was less uncivil, and expressing his reluctance to press a gentlewoman in a strait, said, if she would tell him who she was, he would ask no more security.

"You are very good," said she, as she wiped away the tears that were streaming down her cheeks; but she would not tell her name. Her confusion and despair became extreme, so much so, that I could no longer endure to see one who appeared so ingenuous, yet compelled to shroud herself in mystery, suffer so much from so paltry a cause; and, interfering, I satisfied the demands of the two men. The look of gratitude which she cast upon me was most expressive; but she said nothing. We travelled in company to Inverness, I supplying her with what money was necessary to meet the expenses of the road, which she

took without offering a word of explanation. Before we parted, she called me into an apartment, and assuring me that I should soon hear from her, she thanked me briefly for the assistance I had afforded her. "And this little fellow," continued she, "if he live to be a man, shall thank you too for your kindness to his mother." She then asked if I could know the child again, and I answered that I could not, all infants were so much alike. She said there was a good reason why she wished that I should be able to recognise the child at any future period, and she would show me a private mark by which I should know him as long as I lived. Baring his little bosom accordingly, she displayed the mark of a gold ring, with a ruby, immediately below his left breast. I said it was a very curious mark indeed, and one that I could not mistake. She next asked me if I was a Roman Catholic? but I shook my head, and said, God forbid! and so we parted.

I had learned from the West-Islander that his name was Malcolm M'Leod, a poor and honest Roman Catholic, and that the child was born at his house, one of the most remote places in the world; being on a sequestered and inaccessible peninsula in one of the Western Isles. The infant had been baptized privately by the Bishop of Illismore, by the name of Lewis

William. But farther the man either could not or would not give me any information.

Before I left Inverness I learned that the lady was no other than the noble and fair Lady Julia, and shortly after I got home to Innismore, I received a blank letter, enclosing the sum I had expended on her behalf. Not long after, a message came, desiring me to come express to the Bishop's house. This was the whole amount of the message, and although no definite object was held out to me, I undertook the journey. Indeed, throughout the whole transactions connected with this affair, I cannot understand what motives they were that I acted on. It seems rather that I was influenced by a sort of fatality throughout, as well as the other persons with whom I had to deal. What human probability was there, for instance, that I would obey a summons of this nature? and yet I was summoned. There was no inducement held out to procure my compliance with the request; and yet I did comply with it. Upon what pretext was I to gain admittance to the Bishop's house? I could think of none. And if I am called upon to tell how I did gain admittance, if it were not that subsequent events demonstrate that my proceedings were in accordance with the decrees of a superior destiny, I should say that it was by the mere force of impudence. As I approached the house, I heard there was such a weeping, and screaming, and lamentation, that

I almost thought murder was going on within it. There were many voices, all speaking at once; but the cries were heard above all, and grew more woful and bitter. When I entered the house, which I did without much ceremony, and flung open the door of the apartment from which the noise proceeded, there was Lady Julia screaming in an agony of despair, and holding her child to her bosom, who was crying as bitterly as herself. She was surrounded by the Bishop and three other gentlemen, one of them on his knees, as if imploring her to consent to something, and the other three using gentle force to take the child from her. My entrance seemed to strike them with equal terror and astonishment; they commanded me loudly to retire; but I forced myself forward, while Lady Julia called out and named me, saying I was her friend and protector. She was quite in a state of derangement through agony and despair, and I was much moved when I saw how she pressed her babe to her bosom, bathed him with tears, and kissed him and blessed him a thousand times.

“O Mr MacTavish,” cried she, “they are going to take my child from me,—my dear, dear boy! and I would rather part with my life. But they cannot take my child from me if you will protect me. They cannot—they cannot!” And in that way did she rave on, regardless of all their entreaties.

"My dear Lady Julia, what madness has seized you?" said a reverend-looking gentleman. "Are you going to bring ruin on yourself and your whole family, and to disgrace the holy religion which you profess? Did you not promise that you would give up the child? did you not come here for that special purpose? and do not we all engage, in the most solemn manner, to see him bred and educated as becomes his birth?"

"No, no, no, no!" cried she; "I cannot, I cannot! I will not part with him! I will go with him to the farthest ends of the world, where our names were never heard of,—but, oh! do not separate me from my dear boy!"

The men stared at one another, and held their peace.

"Madam," said I, "I will willingly protect your baby and you, if there is occasion for it, as long as there is a drop of blood in my body; but it strikes me that these gentlemen are in the right, and that you are in the wrong. It is true, I speak in ignorance of circumstances; but from all that I can guess, you cannot doubt of your baby's safety, when all these honourable men stand security to you for him. But if it is necessary that you should part with him, and if you will not intrust him to them, give him to me. I will have him nursed and educated in my own house, and under mine own eye."

"You are very good—you are very good!" said she,

rather calmly. "Well, let this worthy gentleman take the charge of him, and I yield to give him up."

"No, no!" exclaimed they all at once, "no heretic can have the charge of the boy; he must be brought up under our own auspices; therefore, dearest Lady Julia, bethink you what you are doing, before you work your own ruin, and his ruin, and the ruin of us all."

Lady Julia then burst into a long fit of weeping, and I saw she was going to yield; she, however, requested permission to speak a few words with me in private. This was readily granted, and all of them retired. When we were alone, she said to me softly, "They are going to take my child from me, and I cannot and dare not resist them any longer, for fear a worse fate befall him. But I sent for you to be a witness of our separation. You will know my poor hapless child as long as he lives, from the mark that I showed you; and when they force him from me, O watch where they take him, and to whatever quarter that may be, follow, and bring me word, and high shall be your reward. Now, farewell; remember I trust in you, —and God be with you! I do not wish any one to see my last extremity, save those who cause it, for I know my heart must break. Desire them to come in, and say that you have persuaded me to yield to their will."

I did so; but I could see that they only regarded me with looks of suspicion.

I lingered in the narrow lobby, and it was not two minutes, till two persons, one of whom I had previously ascertained by his accent to be an Irish gentleman, hurried by me with the child. I should have followed, but, as, in their haste, they left open the door of the apartment where Julia was, my attention was riveted on the lady; she was paralysed with affliction, and clasped the air, as if trying to embrace something,—but finding her child was no longer in her bosom, she sprung up to an amazing height, uttered a terrible shriek, and fell down strongly convulsed. Shortly after, she uttered a tremulous moan, and died quite away. I had no doubt that her heart was broken, and that she had expired; and indeed the Bishop, and the other gentleman, who remained with her, seemed to be of the same opinion, and were benumbed with astonishment. I called aloud for assistance, when two women came bustling in with water; but the Bishop ordered one of them, in an angry tone, to retire. He gave the command in Gaelic, and the poor creature cowered like a spaniel under the lash, and made all haste out of his sight. This circumstance caused me to take a look at the woman, and I perceived at once that I knew her,—but the hurry and confusion of the moment prevented me from thinking of the incident, less or more, until long afterwards.

Lady Julia at length gave symptoms of returning

animation, and then I recollected the neglect of the charge she had committed to me. I hurried out; but all trace of the child was lost. The two gentlemen who took him from his mother, were walking and conversing deliberately in the garden, as if nothing had happened, and all my inquiries of them and of others were unavailing.

After the loss of Lady Julia's child, I searched the whole country, but no child could I either see or hear of; and at length my only hope rested on being able to remember who the old woman was whom the Bishop ordered so abruptly out of his presence that day the child was disposed of. I was sure, from the manner in which she skulked away, as if afraid of being discovered, that she had taken him away, either dead or alive. Of all the sensations I ever experienced I was now subjected to the most teasing: I was sensible that I knew the woman perfectly well,—so well, that at first I believed I could call her to my recollection whenever I chose; but, though I put my memory to the rack a thousand and a thousand times, the name, residence, and connexions of the woman went farther and farther from my grasp, till at last they vanished like clouds that mock us with forms of the long-departed.

And now I am going to tell a very marvellous story: One day, when I was hunting in Correi-beg of Glen-Anam, I shot so well that I wondered at myself. Be-

fore my unerring aim, whole coveys of moor game fluttered to the earth ; and as for the ptarmigans, they fell like showers of hailstones. At length I began to observe that the wounded birds eyed me with strange, unearthly looks, and recollecting the traditions of the glen, and its name, I suspected there was some enchantment in the case. What, thought I, if I am shooting good fairies, or little harmless hill spirits, or mayhap whole flocks of Papists trying feats of witchcraft !—and to think that I am carrying all these on my back ! While standing in this perplexity, I heard a voice behind me, which said, “ O Sandy MacTavish, Sandy MacTavish, how will you answer for this day’s work ? What will become of me ! what will become of me ! ”

I turned round in great consternation, my hairs all standing on end—but nothing could I see, save a wounded ptarmigan, hopping among the greystones. It looked at its feathery legs and its snow-white breast all covered with blood,—and at length the creature said, in Gaelic, as before, for it could not be expected that a ptarmigan should have spoken English, “ How would you like to find all your family and friends shot and mangled in this way when you gang hame ? Ay, if you do not catch me, you will rue this morning’s work as long as you live,—and long, long afterwards. But if you catch me, your fortune is made, and you will gain both great riches and respect.”

"Then have with you, creature!" exclaimed I, "for it strikes me that I can never make a fortune so easily;" and I ran at it, with my bonnet in both hands, to catch it.

"Hee-hee-hee!" laughed the creature; and away it bounded among the grey stones, jumping like a jackdaw with a clipped wing. I ran and ran, and every time that I tried to clap my bonnet above it, down I came with a rattle among the stones—"Hee-hee-hee!" shouted the bird at every tumble. So provoking was this, and so eager did I become in the pursuit, that I flung away my gun and my load of game, and ran after the bird like a madman, floundering over rugged stones, laying on with my bonnet, and sometimes throwing myself above the little creature, which always eluded me.

I knew all this while that the creature was a witch, or a fairy, or something worse,—but nathless I could not resist chasing it, being resolved to catch it, cost what it would; and on I ran, by cliff and corrie, till I came to a cottage which I remembered having seen once before. The creature, having involved me in the linnas of the glen, had got considerably ahead of me, and took shelter in the cottage. I was all covered with blood as well as the bird, and in that state I ran into the bothy after my prey.

On entering, I heard a great bustle, as if all the inmates were employed in effecting the concealment of

something. I took it for a concern of smuggling, and went boldly forward, with a "Hilloa ! who bides here ?"

At the question there appeared one I had good reason to recollect, at sight of whom my heart thrilled. This was no other than the old woman I had seen at the Bishop's house. I knew her perfectly well, for I had been in the same bothy once before, when out hunting, to get some refreshment. I now wondered much that I should never have been able to recollect who the beldam was, till that moment, when I saw her again in her own house. Her looks betrayed the utmost confusion and dismay, as she addressed me in these words, "Hee-hee, good Mr MacTavish, what will you be seeking so far from home to-day ?"

"I am only seeking a wounded ptarmigan, mistress," said I ; "and if it be not a witch and yourself that I have wounded, I must have it,—for a great deal depends upon my getting hold of the creature."

"Ha, ha ! you are coming pursuing after your fortune the day, Mr MacTavish," said she, "and mayhap you may seize her ; but we have a small piece of an operation to go through before that can take place."

"And pray, what is that, Mrs Elspeth ?" said I ; "for if it be any of your witchcraft doings, I will have no hand in it. Give me my bird ; that is all I ask of you."

"And so you really and positively believe it was a bird you chased in here to-day, Mr MacTavish ?"

“Why, what could I think, mistress? It had the appearance of a bird.”

“Margati Cousland! come hither,” said the old witch; “what is ordained must be done;—lay hold of him, Margati.”

The two women then laid hold of me, and being under some spell, I had no power to resist; so they bound my hands and feet, and laid me on a table, laughing immoderately at my terrors. They then begged I would excuse them, for they were under the necessity of going on with the operation, though it might not be quite agreeable to me in the first instance.

“And pray, Mrs Elspeth, what is this same operation?” said I.

“Why,” said she, “you have come here chasing after a great fortune, and there is no other way of attaining it save by one,—and that is, YOUR HEART’S BLOOD MUST BE LET OUT.”

“That is a very uncommon way of attaining a fortune, Mrs Elspeth,” said I, as good-humouredly as I could, although my heart was quaking within me.

“It is nevertheless a very excellent plan,” said the witch, “and it is very rarely that a fortune can be made without it.” So saying, the beldam plunged a skein-echil into my breast, with a loud and a fiendish laugh. “There goes the heart’s blood of black Sandy Mac-Tavish!” cried she; and that instant I heard the sound

of it rushing to the floor. It was not like the sound of a cataract of blood, however, but rather like the tinkling of a stream of gold guineas. I forced up my head, and behold, there was a stream of pure and shining gold pieces issuing from my bosom; while a number of demons, some in black gowns, and others in white petticoats, were running off with them, and flinging them about in every direction! I could stand this no longer; to have parted with a little blood I found would have been nothing, but to see my vitals drained of a precious treasure, which I knew not had been there, was more than human nature could bear; so I reared out, in a voice that made all the house and all the hills to yell, "Murder! thieves! thieves! robbers!—Murder! Ho! ho! ho!" Thus did I continue loudly to shout, till one of the witches, or infernals, as I thought, dashed a pail of water on my face, a portion of which going into my mouth and windpipe, choked my utterance; but nevertheless the remorseless wretch continued to dash water upon me with an unsparring hand, till at last the spell was broke, and the whole illusion vanished.

In order to establish the credibility of the above relation, I must tell another story, which shall be a very short one.

"Our mhaester alheeps fery lhang this tay, Mrs Roy MacCallum," said my man, Donald, to my old house-keeper.

"Huh aye, and that she does," Tonalid said, "Get pe plessing her elleep to her, honest-shentlemans ! Donald MacIntosh," he heard her saying, "blow to her!"

"Huh aye," Mrs. Roy MacCallum. "But, the bell looked just pen te house to see if m'hafter was waking and quite coot in health; and, would you pe m'hafter, Mrs. MacCallum? her is lying staring and struggling as if her were quite m'had."

"Get forpit, Tonalid MacIntosh!" cried a third of

"Huh aye, to be sure, Mrs. MacCallum, Get forpit, to be sure; but her pe m'had for all tat; and tere pe one creat tial, Mrs. Roy MacCallum, and we m'hafter make it, and tat is py water."

"It pe te creat and thast tial; let us ply te water," rejoined the sage housekeeper. "Hissed!" "I od I od

With that, Mrs. Roy MacCallum and Donald MacIntosh came into my sleeping-room with pails of water, and began to fling it upon me in such copious showers, that I was well high choked; and to prevent myself from being drowned, I sprang up; but still they continued to dash water upon me. At length I knew my own man Donald's voice as I heard him calling out, "Clash on, Mrs. MacCallum! it pe for life or death."

"Huh aye, ply on te water, Tonalid!" cried the other.

"Hold, hold, my good friends," cried I, slipping round the room all dripping wet. "Hold, hold, I am wide awake now, and better."

"Huh! plessit pe Cot, and plessit pe te creat Mac-Tavish!" cried they both at once.

"But where is the witch of the glen?" cried I. "And where is the wounded ptarmigan?—and where is all the gold that came out with my heart's blood?"

"Clash on te water, Mrs MacCallum!" exclaimed Donald; and the indefatigable pails of Donald and the housekeeper were again put in requisition to some purpose. Having skipped about for some time, I at last escaped into a closet, and locked the door. I had then leisure to remonstrate with them through the key-hole; but still there were many things about which we could not come to a right understanding, and I began to dread a tremendous shower-bath from above, as I heard them carrying water up stairs; and that dread brought me first to my proper and right senses.

It will now be perceived that the whole of my adventure in the glen, with the ptarmigan and the witches, was nothing more than a dream. But yet in my opinion it was more than a dream, for it was the same as reality to me. I had all the feelings and sensations of a rational being, and every circumstance was impressed on my mind the same as if I had transacted it awake. Besides, there was a most singular and important revelation imparted to me by the vision: I had discovered who the old woman was whose identity had before perplexed me so much, and who I was sure either had Lady

Julia's boy, or knew where he was. About five years previous to this I had come into the same woman's house, weary and hungry, and laden with game, and was very kindly treated. Of course, her face was quite familiar to me; but till I had this singular dream, all the efforts of my memory could not recall the woman's name and habitation, nor in what country or circumstances I had before seen her. From that morning forth I thought of nothing else save another visit to the forester's cottage in the glen; and, though my heart foreboded some evil, I rested not till I had accomplished it.

It was not long till I made a journey to Aberduchra, in search of the old witch whom I had seen in my dream. I found her; and apparently she had recently suffered much from distress of mind; her eyes were red with weeping, her hairs were hanging in elf-switches, and her dress in much disorder. She knew me, and said, "God bless you, Mr MacTavish, where are you travelling this way?"

"In truth, Mrs Cowan," I replied, "I am just come to see after Lady Julia's little boy, poor Lewis William, you know, who was put under your care by the Bishop, on the first of November last year."

She held up her hands and stared, and then fell a-crying most bitterly, striking her breast, and wringing her hands, like one distracted, but still without answering me one word.

"Ochon, ochon!" said I; "then it is all as I suspected, and the dear child is indeed murdered!"

On this she sprung to her feet, and uttered an appalling scream, and then yelled out, "Murdered! murdered! Is the dear boy murdered? Is he—is he murdered?"

This vehemence of feeling on her part at the idea of the boy's being cut off, convinced me that she had not murdered the child herself; and being greatly relieved in my heart, I sat still as in astonishment, until she again put the question if her dear foster-child was murdered.

"Why, Mrs Cowan, not to my knowledge," I replied. "I did not see him murdered; but if he has not been foully dealt with, what has become of him?—for well I know he was put under your charge; and before the world, and before the judges of the land, I shall make you render an account of him."

"Was the boy yours, Mr MacTavish," said she, "that you are so deeply interested in him? For the love of Heaven, tell me who was his father, and then I shall confess to you every thing that I know concerning him."

I then told the old woman the whole story as I have here related it, and requested her to inform me what had become of the boy.

"He was delivered to me after the most solemn in-

junctions of concealment," said she; "and these were accompanied with threatenings, in case of disobedience, of no ordinary nature. He was to be brought up in this inaccessible wild with us as our grandson; and farther than that, no being was to know. Our reward was to be very high—too high, I am afraid, which may have caused his abstraction. But O he was a dear delightful boy! and I loved him better than my own grandson. He was so playful, so bold, and, at the same time, so forgiving and generous!

"Well, he lived on with us, and grew, and no one acknowledged or noticed him until a little while ago; that one Bill Nicol came into the forest as fox-hunter, and came here to board, to be near the foxes, having, as he pretended, the factor's orders for doing so; and every day he would sport with the two boys, who were both alike fond of him,—and every day would he be giving them rides on his pony, which put them half crazy about the man. And then one day, when he was giving them a ride time about, the knave mounted behind poor little Lewie, and rode off with him altogether into the forest, and there was an end of him. Ransald ran crying after them till he could run no farther, and then, losing sight of them, he sat down and wept. I was busy at work, and thought always that my two little fellows were playing not far off, until I began to wonder where they could be, and ran out to the top of

the little birky knowe-head there, and called, and louder called them ; but nothing answered me, save the echoes of my own voice from the rocks and trees ; so I grew very greatly distracted, and ran up Glen-Cae-las, shouting as I went, and always praying between whiles to the Holy Virgin and to the good saints to restore me my boys. But they did not do it.—Oh no, they never did ! I then began to suspect that this pretended fox-hunter might have been the Wicked One come in disguise to take away my children ; and the more so, as I knew not if Lewie had been blessed in holy church. But what could I do but run on, calling, and crying, and raving all the way, until I came to the pass of Bally-keurach, and then I saw that no pony's foot had passed on that path, and turned and ran home ; but it was growing dark, and there was nobody there, so I took to the woods again. How I spent that night I do not know, but I think I had fallen into a trance through sorrow and fatigue.

“ Next morning, when I came to my senses, the first thing I saw was a man who came by me, chasing a wounded bird, like a white moorfowl, and he was always trying to catch it with his bonnet, and many a hard fall he got among the stones. I called after him, for I was glad to see a human being in that place, and I made all the speed I could to follow ; but he regarded me not, but ran after the wounded bird. He went down

the linns, which retarded him a good deal, and I got quite near him. Then from that he went into a small hollow straight before me, to which I ran, for I wanted to tell him my tale, and beg his assistance in raising the country in the strath below. When I came into the little hollow, he had vanished, although a hare could not have left it without my seeing it. I was greatly astonished, assured that I had seen a vision. But how much more was I astonished to find, on the very spot where he had disappeared, my grandson, Ranald, lying sound asleep, and quite motionless, through hunger and fatigue ! At first I thought he was dead; and lost all recollection of the wonderful way in which I had been led to him ; but when I found he was alive and breathing, I took him up in my arms, and carried him home, and there found the same man, or rather the same apparition, busily employed hunting the wounded bird within this same cottage, and he declared that have it he must. I was terrified almost out of my wits, but tried to thank the mysterious being for leading me to my perishing child. His answer—which I shall never forget—was, ‘ Yes, I have found one, and I will find the other too, if the Almighty spare me in life.’ And when the apparition said so, it gave me such a look in the face—Oh ! ah ! What is this ! what is this !”

Here the old woman began to shriek like one dis-

tracted, and appeared in an agony of terror ; and, to tell the truth, I was not much better myself, when I heard the story of the wounded ptarmigan. But I tried to support the old woman, and asked what ailed her.

“ Well you may ask what ails me !” said she. “ Oh Mr MacTavish, what did I see just now but the very same look that the apparition gave that morning ! The same look, and from the very same features ; for indeed it was the apparition of yourself, in every lineament, and in every article of dress :—your very self. And it is the most strange vision that ever happened to me in all my visionary life !”

“ I will tell you what it is, Mrs Elspeth Cowan,” said I, “ you do not know one half of its strangeness yet ; but tell me the day of the week and the day of the month when you beheld this same vision of myself.”

“ Ay, that day I never shall forget,” answered Elspeth ; “ for of all the days of the year it was the one after I lost my dear foster-son, and that was the seventh of Averile. I have always thought my boy was stolen to be murdered, or put out of the way most unfairly, till this very day ; but now, when I see the same man in flesh and blood, whom I saw that day chasing the wounded bird, I am sure poor Lewie will be found ; for with that very look which you gave me but a minute ago, and in that very place where you stand, your

apparition or yourself said to me, ' Yes, I have found the one, and I will find the other if the Almighty spare me in life.' "

" I do not recollect of saying these words, Mrs Cowan," said I.

" Recollect?" said she; " what is it you mean? Sure you were not here your own self that morning?"

" Why, to tell you the solemn truth," replied I, " I was in the glen that very morning chasing a wounded ptarmigan, and I now have some faint recollection of seeing a red-haired boy lying asleep in a little green hollow beside a grey stone,—and I think I did say these words to some one too. But was not there something more? Was not there something about letting out somebody's heart's blood?"

" Yes; but then that was only a dream I had," said she, " while the other was no dream, but a sad reality. But how, in the name of the blessed saints, do you happen to know of that dream?"

" It is not easy, now-a-days," answered I, " to say what is a dream and what is a reality. For my part, from this moment I renounce all certainty of the distinction. It is a fact, that on that very morning, and at that hour, I was in this glen and in this cottage,—and yet I was neither in this glen nor in this cottage. So, if you can unriddle that, you are welcome."

" I knew you were not here in flesh and blood. I

knew it was your wraith, or *anam*, as we call it ; for, first, you vanished in the hollow before my eyes ; then you appeared here again, and when you went away in haste, I followed you to beg your assistance ; and all that I could hear was your spirit howling under a waterfall of the linn."

This confounded me more than ever, and it was some time before I recovered my self-possession so far as to inquire if what she had related to me was all she knew about the boy.

" Nothing more," she said, " save that you are destined to discover him again, either dead or alive—for I can assure you, from the words that I heard out of your own spirit's mouth, that if you do not find him, and restore him to his birthright, he never will be discovered by mortal man. I went, poor, sachless, and helpless being as I was, to the Bishop, and told him my woful story ; for I durst do nothing till I asked counsel of him. He was, or rather pretended to be, very angry, and said I deserved to be burnt for my negligence, for there was no doubt the boy had fallen over some precipice. It was in vain that I told him how my own grandson had seen him carried off on the pony by the pretended fox-hunter ; he persisted in his own belief, and would not suffer me to mention the circumstances to a single individual. So, knowing that the counsel

of the Lord was with his servant, I could do nothing but weep in secret, and hold my peace."

Thus ended my interview with Elspeth of the glen.

After my visit to the old sibyl, my mind ran much on the extraordinary vision I had had, and on the old witch's having actually seen a being in my shape at the very instant of time that I myself weened and felt that I was there.

I have forgot whether I went to Lady Julia that very night or some time after, but I did carry her the tidings, which threw her into an agony of the deepest distress. She continued for a long space to repeat that her child was murdered,—her dear, her innocent child. But before I left her, she said her situation was a very peculiar one, and therefore she entreated me to be secret, and to tell no one of the circumstance, yet by all means to lose no time in endeavouring to trace the fox-hunter, and to find out, if possible, whether the boy was dead or alive. She concluded by saying, "Exert yourself like a man and a true friend, as you have always been to me. Spare no expense in attaining your object, and my whole fortune is at your disposal." I was so completely involved in the business, that I saw no alternative but that of proceeding,—and not to proceed with vigour was contrary to my nature.

Lady Julia had all this time been kept in profound

ignorance where the child had been concealed, and the very next day after our interview, she paid a visit to old Elspeth Cowan at the remote cottage of Aberduchra, and there I again met with her as I set out on the pursuit. Long and serious was our consultation, and I wrote down all the marks of the man and the horse from Elspeth's mouth; and the child Ranald also gave me some very nice marks of the pony.

The only new thing that had come out, was that the boy Ranald had persisted in saying, that the fox-hunter took his brother Lewie *down* the glen, in place of up, which every other circumstance seemed to indicate. Elspeth had seen them go all three up the glen, the two boys riding on the pony, and the fox-hunter leading it, and Ranald himself was found far up the glen; but yet when we took him to the spot, and pointed up the glen, he said, No, they did not go that way, but the other. Elspeth said it was not possible, but I thought otherwise; for when I asked at Ranald where he thought Nicol the fox-hunter was going with his brother, he said he thought he was taking him home, and that he would come back for him. Elspeth wanted me to take the route through the hills towards the south; but as soon as I heard the boy's tale, I suspected the Bishop had had some share in the abstraction of the missing child, and set out on my search in the direction of his mansion. I asked at every

house and at every person, for such a man and such a pony as I described, making no mention of a boy; but no such man had been seen. At length I chanced to be asking at a shieling, within a mile of the Bishop's house, if, on such a day, they had seen such a man ride by on a black pony. They had not seen him; but there was a poor vagrant boy chanced to be present, and heard my inquiry, and he said he saw a man like that ride by on a black pony one day, but it could not be the man I wanted, for he had a bonny boy on the horse before him.

"Indeed?" said I. "O, then, it could not be the man I want. Had the pony any mark by which you could remember it?"

"*Cheas gear*," said the boy. This was the very mark that little Ranald had given me of the pony. Oho! I have my man now! thought I; so I said no more, but shook my head and went away. Every thing was kept so close about the Bishop's house, I could get no intelligence there, nor even entrance—and in truth, I durst hardly be seen about the premises.

In this dilemma, I recollected the words of the sibyl of the glen, as I had heard them in my strange vision, namely, that my only sure way of making a fortune was by letting out my heart's blood; and also, that when my heart's blood was let out, it proved to be a flood of guineas. Now, thought I to myself, what

does making a fortune mean but carrying out successfully any enterprise one may have in hand? and though to part with money is a very hard matter, especially in an affair in which I have no concern, yet I will try the efficacy of it here, and so learn whether the experiment is worth making in other cases where I am more closely interested.—The truth is, I found that I *was* deeply interested in the affair, although, not being able to satisfy my own mind with reasons why I should be so, I affected to consider myself mightily indifferent about it. In pursuance, therefore, of the plan suggested in my dream, and on a proper opportunity, by means of a present administered to one of the Bishop's servants, I learnt, that about the time when the boy had been carried off by the fox-hunter, a priest of the name of O'Callaghan had made his appearance at the Bishop's house; that he was dressed in a dark grey jacket and trowsers, and rode a black pony with cropped ears; that he was believed to have some secret business with the Bishop, and had frequent consultations with him; and my informant, becoming more and more free in his communications, as the facts, one after another, were drawn from him, confessed to me that he had one night overheard quarrelling between O'Callaghan and his master, and having stolen to the door of the apartment, listened for some time, but was unable to make out more of the angry whisperings within

than a threat from O'Callaghan, that if the Bishop would not give him more, "he (O'Callaghan) would throw him overboard into the first salt dub he came to." On interrogating my informant if he knew whom O'Callaghan meant, when he said he would "throw him overboard," he replied that he could not guess. I had, however, no doubt, that it was the boy I was in search of, and I had as little doubt that the fellow knew to whom the threat referred; but I have often known people have no scruple in telling all about a secret, so as to give any one a key to the complete knowledge of it, who would yet, upon no consideration, give utterance to the secret itself; and judging this to be the case in the present instance, I contented myself with learning farther, that when the priest left the Bishop's, he went directly to Ireland, of which country he was a native, and would, in all probability, ere long revisit Scotland.

Possessed of this clew, I was nevertheless much at a loss to determine what was the most advisable way of following it out. My inclination led me to wait the fellow's return, and to have him seized and examined. But then I bethought me, if I could be instrumental in saving the boy's life, or of discovering where he was placed, or how circumstanced, it would avail me more, and give Lady Julia more satisfaction than any punishment that might be inflicted on the

perpetrators of this deed afterwards. So after a troubled night and day, which I spent in preparation, I armed myself with a pair of pistols and a pair of Highland dirks, a long and a short one, and set out in my arduous undertaking, either to recover the boy or perish in the attempt. And it is needless for me to deny to you, sir, that the vision, and the weird wife of the glen's prophecy, had no small part in urging me to this adventure.

I got no trace of the priest till I went to Abertarf, where I found out that he had lodged in the house of a Catholic, and that he had shown a good deal of kindness and attention to the boy, while the boy seemed also attached to him, but still more to the pony. I went to the house of this man, whose name was Angus Roy MacDonald; but he was close as death, suspicious, and sullen, and would tell me nothing of O'Callaghan's motions. I succeeded, however, in tracing him till he went on board of a Liverpool sloop at Arisaig. I was much at a loss how to proceed, when, in the evening, perceiving a vessel in the offing, bearing against the tide, and hoping that the persons I sought might be aboard of her, I hired a boat to take me out; but we lost sight of her in the dusk of the evening, and I was obliged to bribe the boatmen to take me all the way to Tobermory, having been assured that the Liverpool vessel would be obliged to put

in there, in order to clear at the custom-house. We did not reach Tobermory till the next day at noon ; and as we entered the narrow passage that leads into the harbour, a sloop came full sail by us right before the wind, and I saw a pretty boy standing on the poop. I called out "Lewis" to him, but he only looked over his shoulder as for some one else, and did not answer me. The ship going on, as she turned her stern right towards us, I saw "The Blake of Boston" in golden letters, and thought no more of the encounter till I went on shore, and there I learned on the quay that she was the identical Liverpool vessel of which I was in pursuit, and the boy I had seen, the very one I was in search of. I learnt that he was crying much when ashore, and refused to go on shipboard again till taken by force ; and that he told the people boldly, that that man, Nicol the fox-hunter, had taken him from his mother and father, and his brother Ranald, having enticed him out to give him a ride, and never taken him home again. But the fellow telling them a plausible story, they durst not meddle in the matter. It was known, however, that the vessel had to go round by the Shannon, as she had some valuable loading on board for Limerick.

This was heavy news, as how to get a passage thither I wist not. But the thoughts of the poor boy crying for his home hung about my heart, and so, going to

Greenock I took a passage for Belfast, and travelled on foot or on horseback as I could, all the way to Limerick. When I got there, matters looked still worse. The Blake had not come up to Limerick, but discharged her bales at the mouth of the river, and again sailed; and here was I in a strange country with no one perhaps to believe my tale. The Irish, however, showed no signs of apathy or indifference to my case, as my own countrymen did. They manifested the utmost sympathy for me, and the utmost indignation against O'Callaghan; and the man being known in the country, he was soon found out by the natives. Yet, strange to say! though found out by twenty men all eagerly bent on the discovery, as soon as he gave them a hint respecting the person by whom he was employed, off they went, and never so much as came back to tell either the Mayor or myself that their search had been successful or not.

But two or three officers, who were Protestants, being dispatched in search of him, they soon brought him to Limerick, where he and I were both examined, and he was committed to jail till the next court day. He denied all knowledge of the boy, and all concern whatever in the crime he was charged with; and the ship being gone I could procure no evidence against him. There was nothing but the allegations of parties, upon which no judgment could be given: I had to pay the

expenses of process, and he gave securities for his appearance at the court of Inverness, if he should be cited. I spent nine days more in searching for the boy on the Clare side of the river ; but all my efforts were fruitless. I found that my accusation of their vagrant priest rendered me very unpopular among the natives, and was obliged to relinquish the investigation.

O'Callaghan was in Scotland before me, and on my arrival I caused him to be instantly seized, secure now of enough of witnesses to prove the fact of his having taken off the boy. Old Elspeth of the glen and her husband were summoned, as were Lady Julia and Angus Roy MacDonald. When the day of trial came, O'Callaghan's indictment was read in court, charging him with having abstracted a boy from the sheiling of Aberduchra. The Bishop being present, and a great number of his adherents, the panel boldly denied every circumstance ; and what was my astonishment to find, on the witnesses' names being called, that not one of them was there ! The officers were called and examined, who declared that they could not find one of the witnesses in the whole country. The forester and his wife, they said, had left Aberduchra, and gone nobody knew whither ; Lady Julia had gone to France, and Angus MacDonald to the Lowlands, it was supposed, with cows. The court remarked it was a singular and rather suspicious circumstance, that the witnesses should

all be absent. O'Callaghan said something in his own defence, and having made a reference to the Bishop for his character, his reverence made a long speech in his praise. The consequence was, that as not one witness was produced in support of the accusation, O'Callaghan was once more liberated.

I would never have learned what became of the boy, had not a young soldier, a cousin's son of mine, come to Innismore the other year. He was a fine lad, and I soon became a good deal attached to him ; and he being one of a company stationed in the neighbourhood to guard the passes for the prevention of smuggling, he lived a good deal at my house, while his officer remained nightly at the old mansion-house, the guest of Lady Julia and the young Lord.

It is perhaps proper here to mention that Lady Julia was now the only remaining member of the late Earl's family, and the heir of entail, being the son of a distant relation, had been sent from Ireland to be brought up by Lady Julia. He was a perverse and wicked boy, and grieved her heart every day.

The young man, my relation, was one day called out to follow his captain on a private expedition against some smugglers. The next day one of his comrades came and told me that they had had a set battle with a great band of smugglers, in which several were killed and wounded. "Among the rest," said he, "our gallant

commander, Captain MacKenzie, is killed, and your nephew is lying mortally wounded at the still-house."

I lost no time in getting ready, and mounting one horse, and causing the soldier to take another, I bade him lead the way, and I followed. It may well be supposed that I was much astonished on finding that the lad was leading me straight to the cottage of Aberduchra! Ever since the old forester and his wife had been removed, the cottage had stood uninhabited; and it seems that, from its inaccessible situation, it had been pitched upon as a still-house, and occupied as such, for several years, by a strong band of smugglers from the Deveron. They were all bold, resolute fellows, and when surprised by MacKenzie and his party, and commanded to yield, they soon showed that there was nothing farther from their intention. In one moment every one had a weapon in his hand; they rushed upon the military with such fury that in a few minutes they beat them back, after having run their captain and another man through the body, and wounded several besides. Captain MacKenzie had slain one of the smugglers at the first onset; but the next instant he fell, and his party retired. The smugglers then staved their casks, and fled, leaving the military in possession of the field of battle, and of the sheiling, in which nothing was found save a great rubbish of smashed utensils and the killed and wounded of both sides.

In this state I found the cottage of Aberdackra. There were one smuggler and a soldier quite dead, and a number badly wounded ; and among the latter was the young man, my relative, who was sore wounded in the left shoulder. My whole attention was instantly turned towards him. He was very faint, but the bleeding was stanch'd, and I had hopes of his recovery. I gave him some brandy and water, which revived him a great deal ; and as soon as he could speak, he said, in a low voice, " For God's sake, attend to our gallant captain's wound. Mine is nothing, but, if he is still living, his, I fear, is dangerous ; and a nobler youth never breathed."

I found him lying on a bed of rushes, one soldier supporting his head, and another sitting beside him with a dish of cold water. I asked the captain how he did ; but he only shook his head, and pointed to the wound in his side. I mixed a good strong cup of brandy and water, and gave it him. He swallowed it greedily, and I had then no doubt that the young man was near his last. " I am a great deal the better of that," said he. I requested him not to speak, and then asked the soldiers if the wound had bled freely, but they said no, it had scarcely bled any. I was quite ignorant of surgery, but it struck me that, if possible, the wound should be made to bleed, to prevent it from bleeding inwardly. Accordingly, the men having kindled a good fire in the cottage, I got some warm water, and

began to foment the wound. As the stripes of crust-
ed blood began to disappear, judge of my astonish-
ment, when I perceived the mark of a ruby ring below
his left breast ! There was no mistaking the token.
I knew that moment that I was administering to Lady
Julia's son, for whom I had travelled so far in vain,
and over whom my soul had yearned as over a lost
child of my own. The basin fell from my hands, my hair
stood on end, and my whole frame grew rigid, so that
the soldiers stared at me, thinking I was bewitched, or
seized with some strange malady. The captain, how-
ever, made signs for them to proceed with the foment-
ation, which they did, until the wound bled considera-
bly ; and I began to have some hopes that there might
be a possibility of saving his life. I then sent off a
soldier on one of my horses for the nearest surgeon,
and I myself rode straight to the Castle to Lady Julia,
and informed her of the captain's wound, and the
miserable state in which he was lying at the sheiling
of Aberduchra. She held up her hands, and had nearly
fainted, and made a lamentation so grievous, that I
was convinced she already knew who the young man
was. She instantly ordered the carriage to be got
ready, and a bed put into it, in order to have the cap-
tain conveyed straight to the Castle. I expected she
would have gone in the carriage herself, but when she
only gave charges to the servants and me, I then knew

that the quality and propinquity of her guest were not known to her.

My reflections on the scenes that had happened at that cottage, made a deep impression on me that night, as well they might, considering how singular they were. At that cottage I had once been in spirit, though certainly not in the body, yet there my bodily form was seen speaking and acting as I would have done, and as at the same moment I believed I was doing. By that vision I discovered where the lost boy was to be found, and there I found him ; and when he was lost again, on that very same spot was I told that I should find him, else he never would be discovered by man. And now, after a lapse of fifteen years, and a thousand wanderings on his part overgone, on that very same spot did I again discover him.

Captain MacKenzie was removed to the Castle, and his recovery watched by Lady Julia and myself with the utmost solicitude—a solicitude on her part which seemed to arise from some mysterious impulse of the tie that connected her with the sufferer ; for had she known that she was his mother, her care and anxiety about him could scarcely have been greater. When his wound was so far recovered, that no danger was to be apprehended from the agitating discovery, the secret of his birth was communicated to himself and Lady Julia. It is needless for me to trace farther the de-

tails of their eventful history. That history, the evidence adduced before the courts of law for the rights of heritage, and before the Peers for the titles, have now been divulged and laid quite open, so that the deeds done in darkness have been brought to light, and that which was meant to have been concealed from the knowledge of all mankind, has been published to the whole world, even in its most minute and intricate windings. It is therefore needless for me to recapitulate all the events that preceded the time when this narrative begins. Let it suffice, that Lady Julia's son has been fully proved legitimate, and we have now a Protestant Earl, in spite of all that the Bishop did to prevent it. And it having been, in a great measure, owing to my evidence that the identity of the heir was established, I have now the prospect of being, if not the richest, at least, the most independent man of either Buchan or Mar.

CHAPTER III.

THE MARVELLOUS DOCTOR.

When my parents lived in the old Manse of Ettrick, which they did for a number of years, an old grey-headed man came one summer and lived with them nearly a whole half year, paying my mother at the rate of ten shillings a month for bed, board, and washing. He was a mysterious being; and no one knew who he was, or what he was; but all the neighbourhood reckoned him "uncanny;" which in that part of the country means, a warlock, or one some way conversant with beings of another nature.

I remember him well: he was a tall ungainly figure, dressed in a long black coat, the longest and the narrowest coat I ever saw; his vest was something like blue velvet, and his breeches of leather, buckled with silver knee-buckles. He wore always white thread stockings, and as his breeches came exactly to the knap of the knee, his legs appeared so long and thin that it was a marvel to me how they carried him. Take in black

spade, and a very narrow-brimmed hat, and you have the figure complete; any painter might take his likeness, provided he did not make him too straight in the back, which would never answer, as his formed the segment of a great circle. He was a doctor; but whether of law, medicine, or divinity, I never learned; perhaps of them all, for a doctor he certainly was—we called him so, and never knew him by any other name; some, indeed, called him the Lying Doctor, some the Herb Doctor, and some the Warlock Doctor; but my mother, behind his back, called him always THE MARVELLOUS DOCTOR, which I have chosen to retain, as the one about whose accuracy there can be no dispute.

His whole occupation was in gathering flowers and herbs, and arranging them; and, as he picked a number of these out of the churchyard, the old wives in the vicinity grew terribly jealous of him. He seemed, by his own account, to have been over the whole world, on what business or in what capacity he never mentioned; but from his stories of himself, and of his wonderful feats, one might have concluded that he had been every thing. I remember a number of these stories quite distinctly, for at that time I believed them all for perfect truth; though I have been since led to suspect that it was scarcely consistent with nature or reason they could be so. One or two of these tales I shall here relate, but with this great disadvantage, that I have, in many in-

names, forget the names of the places where they happened. I know nothing about geography then, or where the places were, and the faint recollection I have of them will only, I fear, tend to confuse my narrative the more.

One day, while he was very busy arranging his flowers and herbs, and constantly speaking to himself, my mother said to him. "Doctor, you that kens so weel about the nature of a' kinds o' plants and yirbs, will ye tell me gin there be sic a yirb existing as that, if ye put it either on beast or body, it will gar that beast or body follow you?"

"No, Margaret, there is not an herb existing which has that power by itself: but there is a decoction from certain rare herbs, of which I have had the honour, or rather the misfortune, to be the sole discoverer, which has that effect infallibly."

"Dear Doctor, there was sic a kind of charm i' the world hundred o' years afore ye were born."

"So it has been said, Margaret, so it has been said; but falsely, I assure you. It cost me seven years' hard study and hard labour, both by night and by day, and some thousands of miles' travelling; but at last I effected it, and then I thought my fortune was made. But—would you believe it, Margaret?—my fortune was lost, my time was lost, and I myself was twenty times on the point of being lost too."

“ Dear Doctor, tell us some o’ your ploys wi’ that drog ; for they surely must be very curious, especially if you used it as a love-charm to gar the lasses follow you.”—The Doctor, be it observed, was one of the most unlikely persons in the world to be the object of a tender passion.

“ I did use it as a love-charm,” replied the sage, smiling grimly ; “ and sometimes got those to follow me that I did not want, as you shall hear by and by. But before I proceed, I may inform you, that I was offered a hundred thousand pounds by the College of Physicians in Spain, and twice the sum by the Queen of that country, if I would impart my discovery to them in full ; and I refused it ! Yes, for the sake of human nature I refused it. I durst not take the offer, for my life.”

“ What for, Doctor ? ”

“ What for, woman ? Do you say, what for ? Don’t you see that it would have turned the world upside down, and inverted the whole order of nature ? The lowest miscreant in the country might have taken away the first lady—might have taken her from her parents, or her husband, and kept her a slave to him for life ; and no opiate in nature to counteract the power of the charm. The secret shall go to the grave with me ; for were it once to be made public in any country, that country would be ruined ; and for the sake of good order among mankind, I have slighted all the grandeur

that this world could have bestowed. The first great trial of my skill was a public one ;"—and the Doctor went on to relate that it occurred as follows :

The Spanish Professor.

HAVING brought my valued charm to full perfection abroad, I returned to Britain to enjoy the fruit of my labours, convinced that I would ensure a patent, and carry all the world before me. But on my arrival in London, I was told that a great Spanish Professor had made the discovery five years before, and had arrived at great riches and preferment on that account, under the patronage of the Queen. Convinced that no man alive was thoroughly master of the charm but myself, I went straight to Spain, and waited on this eminent Professor, whose name was Don Felix de Valdez. This man lived in a style superior to the great nobility and grandees of his country. He had a palace that was not exceeded in splendour by any in the city, and a suite of lacqueys, young gentlemen, and physicians, attending him, as if he had been the greatest man in the world. It cost me much trouble, and three days' attendance, before I could be admitted to his presence ; and even then he received me so cavalierly that my British blood boiled with indignation.

"What is it you want with me, fellow ?" said he:

"Sir, I would have you know," said I, "that I am an English Doctor, and Master of Arts, and *your* fellow in any respect. So far good. I was told in my own country, sir, that you are a pretender to the profound art of attachment; or, in other words, that you have made a discovery of that divine elixir, which attaches every living creature touched with it to your person. Do you pretend to such a discovery? Or do you not, sir?"

"And what if I do, most sublime Doctor and Master of Arts? In what way does that concern your great sapience?"

"Only thus far, Professor Don Felix de Valdez," says I, "that the discovery is my own, wholly my own, and solely my own; and after travelling over half the world in my researches for the proper ingredients, and making myself master of the all-powerful nostrum, is it reasonable, do you think, that I should be deprived of my honour and emolument without an effort? I am come from Britain, sir, for the sole purpose of challenging you to a trial of skill before your sovereign and all his people, as well as the learned world in general. I throw down the gauntlet, sir. Dare you enter the lists with me?"

"Desire my lacqueys to take away this mad foreigner," said he to an attendant. "Beat him well with staves, for his impertinence, and give him up to the of-

ficers of police, to be put in the House of Correction; and say to Signior Philippo that I ordered it."

"You ordered it!" said I. "And who are you, to order such a thing? I am a free-born British subject, a Doctor, and Master of Arts and Sciences, and I have a pass from your government to come to Madrid to exercise my calling; and I dare any of you to touch a hair of my head."

"Let him be taken away," said he, nodding disdainfully, "and see that you deal with him as I have commanded."

The students then conducted me gently forth, pretending to pay me great deference; but when I was put into the hands of the vulgar lacqueys, they made sport of me, and having their master's orders, used me with great rudeness, beating me, and pricking me with needle-pointed stilettos, till I was in great fear for my life, and was glad when put into the hands of the police.

Being liberated immediately on making known my country and erudition, I set myself with all my might to bring this haughty and insolent Professor to the test. A number of his students having heard the challenge, it soon made a great noise in Madrid; for the young King, Charles the Third, and particularly his Queen, were half mad about the possession of such a nostrum at that period. In order, therefore, to add fuel to the flame now kindled, I published challenges in every one

of the Spanish journals, and causing three thousand copies to be printed, I posted them up in every corner of the city, distributing them to all the colleges of the kingdom, and to the college of Toledo in particular, of which Don Felix was the Principal—I sent a sealed copy to every one of its twenty-four professors, and caused some hundreds to be distributed amongst the students.

This challenge made a great noise in the city, and soon reached the ears of the Queen, who became quite impatient to witness a trial of our skill in this her favourite art. She harassed his Majesty with such effect, that he was obliged to join her in a request to Professor Don Felix de Valdez, that he would vouchsafe a public trial of skill with this ostentatious foreigner.

The Professor besought that he might be spared the indignity of a public exhibition along with the crazy half-witted foreigner, especially as his was a secret art, and ought only to be practised in secret. But the voices of the court and the colleges were loud for the trial, and the Professor was compelled to consent and name a day. We both waited on their Majesties to settle the order and manner of trial; and on drawing lots who was to exhibit first, the Professor got the preference. The Prado was the place appointed for the exhibition, and Good Friday the day. The Professor

engaged to enter the lists precisely at half past twelve o'clock ; but he begged that he might be suffered to come in disguise, in order to do away all suspicions of a private understanding with others ; and assured their Majesties that he would soon be known to them by his works.

When the appointed day arrived, I verily believed that all Spain had assembled to witness the trial. I was placed next to the royal stage, in company with many learned doctors, the Queen being anxious to witness the effect that the display of her wonderful Professor's skill produced on me, and to hear my remarks. The anxiety that prevailed for almost a whole hour was wonderful ; for no one knew in what guise the Professor would appear, or how attended, or who were the persons on whom the effect of the unguent was to be tried. Whenever a throng or bustle was perceived in any part of the parade, then the buzz began, " Yonder he is now ! Yon must be he, our great Professor, Don Felix de Valdez, the wonder of Spain and of the world !"

The Queen was the first to perceive him, perhaps from some private hint given her in what disguise he would appear ; on which she motioned to me, pointing out a mendicant Friar as my opponent, and added, that she thought it but just and right that I should witness all his motions, his feats, and the power of his art. I

did so, and thought very meanly of the whole exhibition, it being, in fact, nothing else than a farce got up among a great number of associates, all of whom were combined to carry on the deception, and share in the profits accruing therefrom. The Friar did nothing till he came opposite to the royal stage, when, beckoning slightly to her Majesty, he began to look out for his game, and perceiving an elegant lady sitting on a stage with her back towards him, he took a phial from his bosom, and letting the liquid touch the top of his finger, he reached up that finger and touched the hem of the lady's robe. She uttered a scream, as if pierced to the heart, sprung to her feet, and held her breast as if wounded ; then, after looking round and round, as if in great agitation, she descended from the stage, followed the Friar, kneeled at his feet, and entreated to be allowed to follow and serve him. He requested her to depart, as he could not be served by woman ; but she wept and followed on. He came to a thick-lipped African, who was standing grinning at the scene. The Professor touched him with his unguent, and immediately blackie fell a-striving with the lady, who should walk next the wonderful sage, and the two actually went to blows, to the great amusement of the spectators, who applauded these two feats prodigiously, and hailed their Professor as the greatest man in the world. He walked twice the length of the promenade,

and certainly every one whom he touched with his ointment followed him, so that if he had been a stranger in the community as I was, there could scarcely have been a doubt of the efficacy of his unguent of attraction. When he came last before the royal stage, and ours, he was encumbered by a crowd of persons following and kneeling to him; apparently they were of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest. He then caused proclamation to be made from a stage, that if any doubted the power of his elixir, he might have it proved on himself without danger or disgrace; a dowager lady defied him, but he soon brought her to her knee with the rest, and no one of the whole begged to be released.

The King and Queen, and all the judges, then declaring themselves satisfied, the Professor withdrew, with his motley followers, to undo the charm in secret; after that, he returned in most brilliant and gorgeous array, and was received on the royal stage, amid deafening shouts of applause. The King then asked me, if I deemed myself still able to compete with his liege kinsman, Professor Don Felix de Valdez? or if I joined the rest in approval, and yielded the palm to his merits in good fellowship?

I addressed his Majesty with all humility, acknowledged the extent of the Professor's powers, as very wonderful, provided they were all real; but of that

there was no proof to me. "If he had been a foreigner, and a stranger, as I am, in this place, and if prejudices had been excited against him," added I, "then I would have viewed this exhibition of his art as highly wonderful; but, as it is, I only look on it as a well contrived farce."

The Professor reddened, and bit his lip in the height of scorn and indignation; and indeed their Majesties and all the nobility seemed offended at my freedom; on which I added, "My exhibition, my liege, shall be a very short one; and I shall at least convince your Majesty, that there is no deceit nor collusion in it." And with that I took a small syringe from my bosom, which I had concealed there for the purpose, as the liquor, to have due effect, must be always warm with the heat of the body of him that sprinkles it; and with that small instrument, I squirted a spray of my elixir on Professor Don Felix's fine head of hair, that hung in wavy locks almost to his waist.

At that moment there were thousands all standing agape, eager to witness the effect of this bold appeal. The Professor stood up, and looked at me, while the tears stood in his eyes. That was the proudest moment of my life! For about the space of three minutes, his pride seemed warring with his feelings; but the energy and impulse of the latter prevailed, and he came and kneeled at my feet.

"Felix, you dog! what is the meaning of this?" cried I. "How dare you go and dress yourself like a grandee of the kingdom, and then come forth and mount the stage in the presence of royalty, knowing, as you do, that you were born to be my slave? Go this instant! doff that gorgeous apparel, and put on my livery, and come and wait here at my heel. And, do you hear, bring my horse properly caparisoned, and one to yourself; for I ride into the country to dinner. Take note of what I order, and attend to it, else I'll beat you to a jelly, and have you distilled into the elixir of attraction. Presumption indeed, to come into my presence in a dress like that!"

He ran to obey my orders, and then the admiration so lately expressed was turned into contempt. All the people were struck with awe and astonishment. They could not applaud, for they were struck dumb, and eyed me with terror, as if I had been a divinity. "This exceeds all comprehension," said the judges. "If he had told me that he could have upheaved the Pyrenean mountains from their foundations, I could as well have believed it," said the King. But the Queen was the most perverse of all, for she would not believe it, though she witnessed it; and she declared she never would believe it to be a reality, for I had only thrown glamour in their eyes. "Is it possible," said she, "that the most famous man in Spain, or perhaps in the world,

who has hundreds to serve him, and run at his bidding, should all at once, by his own choice, submit to become a slave to an opponent whom he despised, and be buffeted like a dog, without resenting it? No; I'll never believe it is any thing but an illusion."

"There is no denying of your victory," said King Charles to me; "for you have humbled your opponent in the dust.—You must dine with me to-night, as we have a great entertainment to the learned of our kingdom, over all of whom you shall be preferred to the highest place. But as Don Felix de Valdez is likewise an invited guest, let me entreat you to disenchant him, that he may be again restored to his place in society."

"I shall do myself the distinguished honour of dining with your exalted and most Catholic Majesty," I replied. "But will it be no degradation to your high dignity, for the man who has worn my livery in public, to appear the same day at the table of royalty?"

"This is no common occurrence," answered the King. "Although, by one great effort of art, nature has been overpowered, it would be hard that a great man should remain degraded for ever."

"Well, then, I shall not only permit him to leave my service, but I shall order him from it, and beat him from it. I can do no more to oblige your Majesty at present."

"What ! can you not then remove the charm ?" said he. "You saw the Professor could do that at once."

"A mere trick," said I. "If the Professor, Don Felix, had been in the least conscious of the power of his liquor, he would at once have attacked and degraded me. It is quite evident. I expected a trial at least, as I am sure all the company did ; but I stood secure, and held him and his art at defiance. He is a sheer impostor, and his boasted discovery a cheat."

"Nay, but I have tried the power of his unguent again and again, and proved it," said the Queen. "But, indeed, its effect is of very short duration ; therefore, all I request is, that you will give the Professor his liberty ; and take my word for it, it will soon be accepted."

I again promised that I would ; but at the same time I shook my head, as much as to signify to the Queen, she was not aware of the power of my elixir ; and I determined to punish the Professor for his insolence to me, and the sound beating I got in the court of his hotel. While we were speaking, Don Felix approached us, dressed in my plain yellow livery, leading my horse, and mounted on a grand one of his own, that cost two hundred gold ducats, while mine was only a hack, and no very fine animal either.

"How dare you have the impudence to mount my

horse, sir?" exclaimed I, taking his gold-headed whip from him, and lashing him with it. "Get off instantly, you blundering booby, take your own spavined jade, and ride off where I may never see your face again."

"I beg your pardon, honoured master," said he, humbly; "I will take any horse you please; but I thought this had been mine."

"You thought, sirrah! What right have you to think?" I demanded. "I desire no more of your attendance," I continued. "Here, before their Majesties, and all their court and people, I discharge you my service, and dare you, on the penalty of your life, ever to approach my presence."

"Pardon me this time," said he; "I'll sooner die than leave you."

"But you shall leave me or do worse," said I, "and therefore disappear instantly;" and I pushed him through the throng away from me, and lashed him with the whip till he screamed and wept like a lubberly boy.

"You must have some one to ride with you and be your guide," he said; "and why will you not suffer me to do so? You know I cannot leave you."

His Majesty, taking pity on the helpless Professor, sent a livery-man to take his place, and attend me on my little jaunt, at the same time entreating him to desist, and remember who he was. It was all in vain.

He fought with the King's servant for the privilege, mounted my back, and followed me to the villa, about six miles from the city, where I had been engaged to dine. The news had not arrived of my victory when I got there. The lord of the manor was at the exhibition, and he not having returned, the ladies were all impatience to learn the result.

"It becomes not me, noble ladies," said I, "to bring the news of my own triumph, which you might very reasonably expect to be untrue, or overcharged; but you shall witness my power yourselves.

Then they set up eldrich screams in frolic, and begged, for the sake of the Virgin, that I would not put my skill to the test on any of them, for they had no desire to follow to England even a master of the arts and sciences; and every one assured me personally that she would be a horrid plague to me, and that I had better pause before I made the experiment.

"My dear and noble dames," said I, "there is nothing farther from my intention than to make any of you the objects of fascination. But come all hither," and I threw up the sash of the window—"Come all hither, and behold a proof; and if more is required, it shall not be lacking. See; do you all know that gentleman there?"

"What gentleman? Where is he? I see no gentleman," was the general rejoinder.

“That gentleman who is holding my horse—he on the sorry hack there, with yellow livery. You all know him assuredly. That is your great Professor, Don Felix de Valdez, accounted the most wonderful man in Spain, and by many of you the greatest in the world.”

They would not believe it, until I called him close up to the door of the chateau, and showed him to them like any wild beast or natural curiosity, and called him by his name. Then they grew frightened, or pretended to be so, at being in the presence of a man of so much power, for they all knew the Professor personally; and if one could have believed them, they were like to go into hysterics for fear of fascination. Yet, for all that, I perceived they were dying for a specimen of my art, and that any of them would rather the experiment should be made on herself, than not witness it.

Accordingly, there was a very handsome and engaging brunette of the party, named Donna Rashelli, on whom I could not help sometimes casting an eye, being a little fascinated myself. This was soon perceived by the lively group, and they all gathered round me, and teased me to try the power of my philtre on Rashelli. I asked the lady's consent, on which she answered rather disdainfully, that “*she would be fascinated indeed if she followed me!*” and therefore she held me at defiance, provided I did not *touch* her, which she would *not* allow.”

Without more ado, I took my tube from my bosom, and squirted a little of the philtre on her left-foot shoe—at least I meant it so, though I afterwards perceived that some of it had touched her stocking.

“And now, Donna Rashelli,” said I, “you are in for your part in this drama, and you little know what you have authorized.” She turned from me in disdain; but it was not long till I beheld the tears gathering in her eyes; she retired hastily to a recess in a window, covered her face with her hands, and wept bitterly. The others tried to comfort her, and laugh her out of her frenzy, but that was of no avail; she broke from them, and, drowned in tears, embraced my knees, requesting in the most fervent terms to be allowed the liberty of following me over the world.

The ladies were all thrown by this into the utmost consternation, and besought me to undo the charm, both for the sake of the young lady herself and her honorable kin; but I had taken my measures, and paid no regard to their entreaties. On the contrary, I made my apology for not being able to dine there, owing to the King's commanding my attendance at the palace, took a hasty leave, mounted my horse, and, with Don Felix at my back, rode away.

I knew all their power could not detain Donna Rashelli, and, riding slowly, I heard the screams of madness and despair as they tried to hold her. She tore

their head-dresses and robes in pieces, and fought like a fury, till they were glad to suffer her to go ; but they all followed in a group, to overtake and entreat me to restore their friend to liberty.

I forded the stream that swept round the grounds, and waited on the other bank, well knowing what would occur, as a Spanish maiden never crosses even a rivulet without taking off her shoes and stockings. Accordingly she came running to the side of the stream, followed by all the ladies of the chateau, calling to me, and adjuring me to have pity on them. I laughed aloud at their tribulation, saying, I had done nothing but at their joint request, and they must now abide by the consequences. Rashelli threw off her shoes and stockings in a moment, and rushed into the stream, for fear of being detained ; but before taking two steps, the charm being removed with her left-foot shoe, she stood still, abashed ; and so fine a model of blushing and repentant beauty I never beheld, with her raven hair hanging dishevelled far over her waist, her feet and half her limbs of alabaster bathing in the stream, and her cheek overspread with the blush of shame.

“ What am I about ? ” cried she. “ Am I mad ? or bewitched ? or possessed of a demon, to run after a mountebank, that I would order the menials to drive from my door ! ”

“ So you are gone, then, dear Donna Rashelli ? ”

cried I. "Farewell, then, and peace be with you. Shall I not see you again before leaving this country?" but she looked not up, nor deigned to reply. Away she tripped, led by one lady on each hand, barefooted as she was, till they came to the gravel walk, and then she slipped on her morocco shoes. The moment her left-foot shoe was on, she sprung towards me again, and all the dames after her full cry. It was precisely like a hare-hunt, and so comic, that even the degraded Don Felix laughed amain at the scene. Again she plunged into the stream, and again she returned, weeping for shame; and this self-same scene was acted seven times over. At length I took compassion on the humbled beauty, and called to her aunt to seize her left-foot shoe, and wash it in the river. She did so; and I, thinking all was then over and safe, rode on my way. But I had not gone three furlongs till the chase again commenced as loud and as violently as ever, and in a short time the lady was again in the stream. I was vexed at this, not knowing what was the matter, and terrified that I might have attached her to me for life; but I besought her friends to keep her from putting on her stocking likewise, till it was washed and fomented as well as her shoe. This they went about with great eagerness, an old dame seizing the stocking, and hiding it in her bosom; and when I saw this I rode quickly away, afraid I should be too late for my engagement with the King.

We had turned the corner of a wood, when again the screams and yells of females reached our ears.

"What, in the name of St Nicholas, is this now?" said I.

"I suppose the hunt is up again, sir; but surely our best plan is to ride off and leave them," replied Don Felix.

"That will never do," returned I; "I cannot have a lady of rank attending me at the palace; and no power on earth, save iron and chains, can detain her, if one-thousandth part of a drop of my elixir remain about her person."

We turned back, and behold there was the old dowager coming waddling along, with a haste and agitation not to be described, and all her daughters, nieces, and maidens, after her. She had taken the river at the broadest, shoes and all, and had got so far a-head of her pursuers that she reached me first, and seizing me by the leg, embraced and kissed it, begging and praying all the while for my favour, in the most breathless and grotesque manner imaginable. I knew not what to do; not in the least aware how she became affected, till Donna Rashelli called out, "O, the stocking, sir, the stocking!" on which I caused them to take it from her altogether, and give it to me, and then they went home in peace.

I dined that night with their Majesties, not indeed at

quests of the young nobles for supplies, I might almost have exhausted the riches of Spain ; but as it was, I had got more than my own weight in gold, part of which I forwarded to London, and put the remainder out to interest in Spain, and left Madrid not without fear of being seized and sent to the Inquisition as a necromancer. In place of that, however, the highest honours were bestowed on me, and I was accompanied to the port by numbers of the first people of the realm, and by all the friends of the Professor Don Felix de Valdez. These people had laid a plot to assassinate me, which they would have executed but for fear that the charm would never leave their friend ; and as Felix himself discovered it to me, I kept him in bondage till the very day I was about to sail ; then I caused his head to be shaved, and washed with a preparation of vinegar, alum, and cinnamon ; and he returned to his senses and right feelings once more. But he never could show his face again in the land wherein he had been so much caressed and admired, but changed his name and retired to Peru, where he acquired both fame and respectability.

The Countess.

WHEN a man gains great wealth too suddenly and with much ease, it is not unusual for him to throw it away with as little concern as he had anxiety in the ga-

thering of it. This I was aware of, and determined to avoid. I began, therefore, without loss of time, to look about me for a respectable settlement in life ; and having, after much inquiry, obtained a list of the unmarried ladies possessing the greatest fortunes in England, I fixed on a young Countess, who was a widow, had a large fortune, and suited my wishes in every respect. Possessing as I did the divine cordial of love, I had no fears of her ready compliance ; so, after providing myself with a suitable equipage, I set off to her residence to court and win her without any loss of time.

On arriving at her mansion about noon, I was rather coldly received, which was not surprising, for I had no introduction, but trusted to my own powers alone. Though shy and reserved at first, she, however, at length invited me to an early dinner, letting me know at the same time that no visitor remained there overnight when her brother was not present. This was so much gained ; so I made my acknowledgments, and accepted the invitation,—thinking to myself, My pretty Countess, before you and I part, your haughtiness shall be wonderfully abated !—I waited my opportunity, and as she was leaving the apartment, aimed a small sprinkling of my cordial at her bushy locks ; but owing to a sudden cast of her head, as ladies will affect pretty airs of disdain, the spray of my powerful elixir of

love fell on an embroidered scarf that hung gracefully on her shoulder.

I was now sure of the effect, provided she did not throw the scarf aside before I got her properly sprinkled anew, but I had hopes its operation would be too instant and potent to permit that. I judged right; in three minutes she returned to the drawing-room, and proposed that we two should take a walk in her park before dinner, as she had some curiosities to show me. I acquiesced with pleasure, as may well be supposed. —I have you now, my pretty Countess, thought I; if it be in your power to escape me, I shall account you more than woman.

This park of hers was an immense field enclosed with a high wall, with a rail on the top. She had some roes in it, one couple of fallow deer, and a herd of kine. This last was what she pretended that she wished to show me; they were all milk-white, nay, as white as snow. They were not of the wild bison breed, but as gentle and tame as lambs—came to her when called by their names, and seemed so fond of being caressed, that several were following and teasing her at the same time. One favourite in particular was so fond, that she became troublesome; and the lady wished to be quit of her. But the beast would not go away. She followed on, humming, and rubbing on her mistress with her cheek, till at last the latter, to rid herself of the annoyance, took

her scarf, and struck the cow sharply across the face with it! The tassels of the scarf fastened on the far horn of the cow, and the animal being a little hurt by the stroke, as well as blinded, it sprung away; and in one moment the lady lost hold of her scarf. This was death and destruction to me; for the lady was thus bereaved of all her attachment to me in an instant, and what the Countess had lost was transferred to the cow. I therefore pursued the animal with my whole speed, calling her many kind and affectionate names, to make her stop. These she did not seem to understand, for stop she would not; but perceiving that she was a little blindfolded with the scarf, I slid quietly forward, and making a great spring, seized the embroidered scarf by the corner. The cow galloped, and I ran and held, determined to have the scarf, though I should tear it all to pieces,—for I knew well that my divine elixir had the effect of rousing animals into boundless rage and madness,—and held with a desperate grasp. I could not obtain it! All that I effected was to fasten the other horn in it likewise, and away went the cow flaunting through the park, like a fine madam in her gold embroidery.

I fled to the Countess as fast as my feet could carry me, and begged her, for Heaven's sake, to fly with me, for that our lives were at stake. She could not understand this; and moreover, she, that a minute or two before had been clinging to me with as much confidence

as if our acquaintance had been of many years' standing, and of the most intimate kind, appeared to have conceived a sort of horror of me, and would not allow me to approach her. There was no time to parley; so I left her to shift for herself, and fled with all my might towards the gate at which we entered, knowing of no other point of egress. Time was it; for the creature instantly became furious, and came after me at full speed, bellowing like some agonized fiend escaped from the infernal regions. The herd was roused by the outrageous sounds, and followed in the same direction, every one galloping faster and roaring louder than another, apparently for company's sake; but, far a-head of them all, the cow came with the embroidered scarf flying over her shoulders, hanging out her tongue and bellowing, and gaining every minute on me. Next her in order came a stately milk-white bull, tall as a hunting steed, and shapely as a deer. My heart became chill with horror; for of all things on this earth, I stood in the most mortal terror of a bull. I saw, however, that I would gain the wicket before I was overtaken; and, in the brightness of hope, I looked back to see what had become of the Countess. She had fallen down on a rising ground in a convulsion of laughter! This nettled me exceedingly; however, I gained the gate; but, O misery and despair! it was fast locked, the Countess having the pass-key. To clear the wall was out of my

power in such a dilemma as I then was in, so I had nothing left for it but swiftness of foot. Often had I valued myself on that qualification, but little expected ever to have so much need of it. So I ran and ran, pursued by twenty milk-white kine and a bull, all bellowing like as many infernal creatures. Never was there such another chase ! I tried to reach the place where the Countess was, thinking she might be able, by her voice, to stay them, or, at all events, that she would tell me how I could escape from their fury. But the drove having all got between her and me, I could not effect it, and was obliged to run at random, which I continued to do, straining with all my might, but now found that my breath was nearly gone, and the terrible race drawing to a crisis.

What was to be done ? Life was sweet, but expedients there were none. There were no trees in the park save young ones, dropped down, as it were, here and there, with palings round them, to prevent the cattle from destroying them. The only one that I could perceive was a tall fir, I suppose of the larch species, which seemed calculated to afford a little shelter in a desperate case ; so I made towards it with a last effort. There was a triangular paling around it, setting my foot on which, I darted among the branches, clomb like a cat, and soon vanished among the foliage.

Then did I call aloud to the Countess for assistance,

implored her to raise the country for my rescue ; but all that she did, was to come towards me herself, slowly and with lagging pace, for she was feeble with laughing ; and when she did come, the cattle were all so infuriated that they would not once regard her.

“ What is the matter with my cattle, sir ? ” cried she. “ They are surely bewitched.”

“ I think they are bedeviled, and that is worse, madam,” returned I. “ But, for Heaven’s sake, try to regain the scarf. It is the scarf which is the cause of all this uproar.”

“ What is in the scarf ? ” said she. “ It can have no effect in raising this deadly enmity against you, if all is as it should be, which I now begin to suspect, from some strange diversity of feelings I have experienced.”

“ It is merely on account of the gold that is on it, madam,” said I. “ You cannot imagine how mad the sight of gold, that pest of the earth, makes some animals ; and it was the effort I made to get it from the animal that has excited in her so much fury against me.”

“ That is most strange indeed ! ” exclaimed the lady. “ Then the animal shall keep it for me, for I would not for half my fortune that these favourites should be driven to become my persecutors.”

She now called the cattle by their names, and some of them left me ; for it was evident that, save the charmed animal, the rest of the herd were only running

for company or diversion's sake. Still their looks were exceedingly wild and unstable, and the one that wore the anointed shawl, named Fair Margaret, continued foaming mad, and would do nothing but stand and bellow, toss her adorned head, and look up to the tree. I would have given ten thousand pounds to have got hold of that vile embroidered scarf, but to effect it, and retain my life, at that time was impracticable.

And now a scene ensued, which, for horror to me could not be equalled, although, to any unconcerned beholder, it must have appeared ludicrous in the extreme. The bull, perceiving one of his favourite mates thus distempered, showed a great deal of anxiety; he went round her, and round her, and perceiving the flaunting thing on her head and shoulders, he seemed to entertain some kind of idea that it was the cause of this unwonted and obstreperous noise. He tried to fling it off with his horns, I know not how oft; but so awkward were his efforts that they all failed. Enraged at being thus baffled, he then had recourse to a most unexpected expedient—he actually seized the scarf with his great mouth, tore it off, and in a few seconds swallowed it every thread!

What was I to do now? Here was a new enemy, and one ten times more formidable than the other, who had swallowed up the elixir, and whom, therefore, it was impossible ever to disarm; who, I knew, would

pursue me to the death, even though at the distance of fifty miles. I was in the most dreadful agony of terror imaginable, as well I might, for the cow went away shaking her ears, as if happily quit of a tormentor, and the bull instantly began to tear up the earth with hoof and horn, while the late bellowings of the cow were, to him, like the howl of a beagle to the roar of a lion. They made the very earth to quake ; while distant woods, and walls, and the very skies, returned the astounding echoes. He went round and round the tree, digging graves on each side of it ; and his fury still increasing, he broke through the paling as it had been a spider's web, and setting his head to the trunk, pushed with all his mighty force, doubled by supernatural rage. The tree yielded like a bulrush, until I hung dangling from it as if suspended from a cross-beam ; still I durst not quit my hold, having no other resource. While in this situation, I observed the Countess speeding away. It seemed to me as if she were Hope flying from me and abandoning me to my fate, and I uttered some piercing cries of desperation. The tree, however, was young and elastic, and always as the infuriated animal withdrew his force for a new attack, it sprung up to its original slender and stately form, and then down it went again ; so that there was I swinging between heaven and earth, expecting every moment to be my last ; and if the bull had not, in his mad efforts, wheeled round to the

contrary side, I might have been swinging there to this day. When he changed sides, the fibres of the tree weakened, and at last I came down to the earth, and he made at me with full force; it was in vain that I called to him to keep off, and bullied him, and pretended to hunt dogs on him; on he came, and plunged his horns into the foliage; the cows did the same for company's sake, and, I'm sure, never was there a poor soul so completely mobbed by a vulgar herd. Still the tree had as much strength left as to heave me gently above their reach, and no more, and I now began to lose all power through terror and despair, and merely kept my hold instinctively, as a drowning man would hold by a rush. The next push the tree got it was again laid prostrate, and again the bull dashed his horns into the foliage, and through that into the earth. I now saw there was no longer any hope of safety if I remained where I was, and therefore quitted hold of the tree. How I escaped I scarce can tell, but I did escape through amongst the feet of the cows.

At first I stole away like a hare from a cover, and could not help admiring the absurdity of the cows, that continued tossing and tearing the tree with their horns, as if determined not to leave a stiver of it; whilst the bull continued grovelling with his horns, down through the branches and into the ground. Heavens! with what velocity I clove the wind! I have fled from bat-

tle—I have fled from the face of the lions of Asia, the dragons of Africa, and the snakes of America—I have fled before the Indians with their scalping knives ; but never in my life was I enabled to run with such speed as I did from this infuriated monster.

He was now coming full speed after me, as I knew he would, the moment he disengaged himself ; but I had got a good way a-head, and, I assure you, was losing no time, and as I was following a small beaten track, I came to a stile over the wall. I never was so thankful for any thing since I was born ! It was a crooked stone stair, with angles to hinder animals from passing, and a locked door on the top, about the height of an ordinary man. I easily surmounted this, by getting hold of the iron spikes on the top ; and now, being clear of my adversary, I set my head over the door and looked him in the face, mocking and provoking him all that I could, for I had no other means of retaliation, and felt exceedingly indignant at having been put in danger of my life by so ignoble an enemy. I never beheld a more hideous picture of rage ! He was foaming at the mouth, and rather belching than bellowing ; his tail was writhing in the air like a serpent, and his eyes burning like small globes of bright flame. He grew so enraged at length, that he rushed up the stone stair, and the frame-work at the angles began to crash before him. Thinks I to myself,

Friend, I do not covet such a close vicinity with you; so, with your leave, I'll keep a due distance; and then descending to the high road, I again began to speed away, though rather leisurely, knowing that he could not possibly get over the iron-railed wall.

There was now a close hedge on every side of me, about eight or ten feet high, and as a man who has been in great jeopardy naturally looks about him for some safe retreat in case of an emergency, so I continued jogging on and looking for such, but perceived none; when, hearing a great noise far behind me, I looked back, and saw the irresistible monster coming tumbling from the wall, bringing gates, bars, and railing, all before him. He fell with a tremendous crash, and I had great hopes his neck was broken, for at first he tried to rise, and, stumbling, fell down again; but, to my dismay, he was soon again on the chase, and making ground on me faster than ever. He came close on me at last, and I had no other shift than to throw off my fine coat, turn round to await him, and fling it over his horns and eyes.

This not only marred him, but detained him long wreaking his vengeance on the coat, which he tore all to pieces with his feet and horns, taking it for a part of me. By this time I had reached a willow-tree in the hedge, the twigs of which hung down within reach. I seized on two or three of these, wrung them to-

gether like a rope, and by the assistance of that, swung myself over the hedge. Still I slackened not my pace, knowing that the devil was in the beast, and that nothing but blood would allay his fury. Accordingly, it was not long till I saw him plunging in the hedge; and through it he came.

I now perceived a fine sheet of water on my left, about a mile broad, I knew not whether a lake or river, never having been in those bounds before. I made towards it with all my remaining energy, which was not great. I cleared many common stone-walls in my course, but these proved no obstacles to my pursuer, and before I reached the lake, he came so close upon me, that I was obliged to fling my hat in his face, and as he fortunately took that for my head, it served him a good while to crush it in pieces, so that I made to the lake and plunged in. At the very first, I dived and swam under water as long as I could keep my breath, assured that my enemy would lose all traces of me then; but when I came to the surface, I found him puffing within two yards of me. I was in such horror, that I knew not what to do, for I found he could swim twice as fast as I could; so I dived again, but my breath being gone, I could not remain below, and whenever I came to the surface, there was he.

If I had had the smallest reasoning faculty left, or had once entertained a thought of resistance, I might

easily have known that I was now perfectly safe. The beast could not harm me. Whenever he made a push at me, his head went below the water, which confounded him. My perturbation was so extreme, that I was on the point of perishing from exhaustion, before I perceived this to be the case. When, however, I did observe it, I took courage, seized him by the tail, clomb upon his back, and then rode in perfect safety.

I never got a more complete and satisfactory revenge of an enemy, not even over the Spanish Professor, and that was complete enough ; but here I had nothing to do but to sit exulting on the monster's back, while he kept wallowing and struggling in the waves. I then took my penknife, and stabbed him deliberately over the whole body, letting out his heart's blood. He took this very much amiss, but he had now got enough of blood around him, and began to calm himself. I kept my seat nevertheless, to make all sure, till his head sunk below the water, while his huge hinder parts turned straight upmost, and I left him floating away like a huge buoy that had lost its anchor.

“ Now, Doctor, gin a' tales be true, yours is nae lee, that is certain,” said my mother, at the conclusion of this narration ; “ but I want some explanations—it's a grand story, but I want to take the consequences

along wi' me. What did the Queen o' Spain wi' a' the ointment you left wi' her? I'm thinking there wad be some strange scenes about that Court for a while."

"Why, Margaret, to say the truth, the elixir was not used in such a way as might have been expected. The truth appeared afterwards to have been this: The King had at that time resolved on that ruinous, and then very unpopular war, about what was called the Family Compact; and finding that the clergy, and a part of the principal nobility, were in opposition to it, and that, without their concurrence, the war could not be prosecuted with any effect, the Queen took this very politic method of purchasing plenty of my divine elixir of attachment, and giving them all a touch of it every one. The effect was, of course, instant, potent, and notorious; and it is a curious and incontestable fact, that the effects of that sprinkling have continued the mania of attachment among that class of Spain to this day."

"And how came you on wi' your grand Countess? Ye wad be a bonny figure gaun hame again to her place, half-naked, and like a droukit crow, wi' the life of her favourite animal to answer for!"

"That is rather a painful subject, Margaret—rather a painful subject. I never saw her again! I had lost my coat and hat. I had lost all my money, which was in notes, in swimming and diving. I had lost my carriage

and horses, and I had lost my good name, which was worst of all ; for from that day forth, I was branded and shunned as a necromancer. The abrupt and extraordinary changes in the lady's sentiments had not escaped her own notice, while the distraction of the animals on the transference of the enchanted scarf to them, confirmed her worst suspicions, that I was a dealer in unlawful arts, and come to gain possession of herself and fortune, by the most infamous measures ; and as I did not choose to come to an explanation with her on that subject, I escaped as quietly from the district as possible.

“ It surely can be no sin to dive into the hidden mysteries of nature, particularly those of plants and flowers. Why, then, have I been punished as never pharmacopolist was punished before ; can you tell me that, Margaret ? ”

“ Indeed, can I—weel enough—Doctor. Other men have studied the qualities o' yirbs to assist nature ; but ye have done it only to pervert nature,—and I hope you hae read your sin in your punishment.”

“ The very sentiment that my heart has whispered to me a thousand times ! It indeed occurred to me, whilst skulking about on my escape after the adventure with the Countess ; but it was not until farther and still more bitter experience of the dangerous effects of my secret, that I could bring myself to destroy

the maddening liquid. It had taken years of anxiety and labour to perfect a mixture, from which I anticipated the most beneficial results. The consequences which it drew upon me, although, at first, they promised to be all I could wish, proved in the end every way annoying, and often wellnigh fatal, and I carefully consumed with fire every drop of the potion, and every scrap of writing, in which the progress of the discovery had been noted. I cannot myself forget the painful and tedious steps by which it was obtained. And even after all the disasters to which it has subjected me—after the miserable wreck of all my high-pitched ambition, I cannot but feel a pride in the consciousness that I carry with me the knowledge of a secret never before possessed by mortal man, which no one shall learn from me, and which it is all but certain that none after me will have perseverance enough, or genius, to arrive at!”

The learned Doctor usually wound up the history of an adventure with a sonorous conclusion like the above, the high-wrought theatrical tone of which, as it was incomprehensible to his hearers, for the most part produced a wonderful effect. Looking upon the gaunt form of the sage, I was penetrated with immeasurable reverence, and though the fascination of his marvellous stories kept me listening with eager curiosity while they lasted, I always retired shortly after

at command speaking, not being able to endure the august presence of so wise a personage as he appeared to me to be.

Many of his relations were still more marvellous than those I have preserved; but these are sufficient for a specimen, and it would be idle to pursue the Doctor's hallucinations farther. All I can say about these adventures of his is, that when I heard them first, I received them as strictly true; my mother believed them most implicitly, and the Doctor related them as if he had believed in the truth of them himself. But there were disputes every day between my mother and him about the invention of the charm, the former always maintaining that it was known to the chiefs of the gipsy tribes for centuries bygone; and as proofs of her position, she cited Johnie Faa's seduction of the Earl of Cassillis's lady, so well known in Lowland song, and Hector Kennedy's seduction of three brides, all of high quality, by merely touching the palms of their hands, after which no power could prevent any of them from following him. She likewise told a very affecting story of an exceedingly beautiful girl, named Sophy Sloan, who left Kirkhope, and eloped after the gipsies, though she had never exchanged a word with one of them. Her father and uncle followed, and found her with them in an old kiln on the water of Milk. Her head was wounded,

bloody, and tied up with a napkin. They had pawned all her good clothes, and covered her with rags, and though weeping with grief and despair, yet she refused to leave them. The man to whom she was attached had never asked her to go with him ; he even threatened her with death if she would not return with her father, but she continued obstinate, and was not suffered long to outlive her infatuation and disgrace. This story *was* a fact ; yet the Doctor held all these instances in utter contempt, and maintained his prerogative, as the sole and original inventor of THE ELIXIR OF LOVE.

There was not a doubt that the Doctor was skulking, and in terror of being apprehended for some misdemeanour, all the time he was at Ettrick Manse ; and never one of us had a doubt that it was on account of some enchantment. But I had reason to conclude, long afterwards, that his seclusion then, and all the latter part of his life, was owing to an unfortunate and fatal experiment in pharmacy, which deprived society of a number of valuable lives. The circumstances are related in a note to the third volume of Eustace's *Pharmacopœia*, and it will there be seen that the description of the delinquent suits exactly with that of THE MARVELLOUS DOCTOR.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WITCHES OF TRAQUAIR.

THERE was once a young man, a native of Traquair, in the county of Peebles, whose name was Colin Hyslop, and who suffered more by witchcraft, and the intervention of supernatural beings, than any man I ever heard of.

Traquair was a terrible place then ! There was a witch almost in every hamlet, and a warlock here and there besides. There were no fewer than twelve witches in one straggling hamlet, called Taniel Burn, and five in Kirk Row. What a desperate place Traquair had been in those days ! But there is no person who is so apt to overshoot his mark as the Devil. He must be a great fool in the main ; for, with all his supposed acuteness, he often runs himself into the most confounded blunders that ever the leader of an opposition got into the midst of. Throughout all the annals of the human race, it is manifest, that whenever he was aiming to do the most evil, he was uniformly

employed in such a way as to bring about the most good ; and it seems to have been so, in a particular manner, in the case with which my tale shall make the reader acquainted.

The truth is, that Popery was then on its last legs, and the Devil, finding it (as then exercised) a very convenient and profitable sort of religion, exerted himself beyond measure to give its motley hues a little more variety ; and the making witches and warlocks, and holding nocturnal revels with them, where every sort of devilry was exercised, was at that time with him a favourite plan. It was also favourably received by the meaner sort of the populace. Witches gloried in their power, and warlocks in their foreknowledge of events, and the energies of their master. Women, beyond a certain age, when the pleasures and hopes of youth delighted no more, flew to an intercourse with the unseen powers, as affording an excitement of a higher and more terrible nature ; and men, whose tempers had been soured by disappointment and ill usage, betook themselves to the Prince of the Power of the Air, enlisting under his banner, in hopes of obtaining revenge on their oppressors, or those against whom they had conceived displeasure. However extravagant this may appear, there is no doubt of the fact, that, in those days, the hopes of attaining some energies beyond the reach of mere human capability, inflamed the

ignorant and wicked to attempts and acts of the most diabolical nature ; for hundreds acknowledged their principles, and gloried in them, before the tribunals that adjudged them to the stake.

"I am now fairly under the power of witchcraft," said Colin Hyslop, as he sat on the side of the Feathen Hill, with his plaid drawn over his head, the tears running down his brown manly cheek, and a paper marked with uncouth lines and figures in his hand,—
"I am now fairly under the power of witchcraft, and must submit to my fate ; I am entangled, enchained, enslaved ; and the fault is all my own, for I have committed that degree of sin which my sainted and dying father assured me would subject me to the snares of my hellish neighbours and sworn adversaries. My pickle sheep have a' been bewitched, and a great part o' them have died dancing hornpipes and French curtilions. I have been changed, and ower again changed, into shapes and forms that I darena think of, far less name ; and a' through account of my ain sin. Hech ! but it is a queer thing that sin ! It has sae mony inroads to the heart, and outlets by the senses, that we seem to live and breathe in it. And I canna trow that the Deil is the wyte of a' our sins neither. Na, na : black as he is, he canna be the cause and the mover of a' our transgressions, for I find them often engendering and breeding in my heart as fast as mag-

gots on tainted carrion ; and then it is out o' the power of man to keep them down. My father tauld me, that if ance I let the Deil get his little finger into ~~ane~~ o' my transactions, he wad soon hae his hail hand into them a'. Now I hae found it in effect, but not in belief ; for, from a' that I can borrow frae Rob Kirkwood, the warlock, and my aunty Nans, the wickedest witch in Christendye, the Deil appears to me to be a geyan obliging chap. That he is wayward and fond o' sin, I hae nae doubt ; but in that he has mony neibhoturs. And then his great power over the senses and conditions of men, over the winds, the waters, and the element of flame, is to me incomprehensible, and would make him appear rather a sort of vicegerent over the outskirts and unruly parts of nature, than an opponent to its lawful lord.—What then shall I do with this ?” looking at the scroll ; “shall I subscribe to the conditions, and enlist under his banner, or shall I not ? O love, love ! were it not for thee, all the torments that Old Mahoun and his followers could inflict, should not induce me to quit the plain path of Christianity. But that disdainful, cruel, and lovely Barbara ! I must and will have her, though my repentance should be without measure and without end. So then it is settled ! Here I will draw blood from my arm—blot out the sign of the cross with it, and form that of the crescent, and these other things, the meaning of which I do not

know.—Halloo ! What's that ? Two beautiful deers, as I am a sinner, and one of them lame. What a prey for poor ruined Colin ! and fairly off the royal bounds, too. Now for it, Bawty, my fine dog ! now for a clean chase ! A' the links o' the Feathen Wood winna hide them from your infallible nose, billy Bawty. Halloo ! off you go ! and now for the bow and the broad arrow at the head slap !—What ! ye winna hunt a foot-length after them, will ye no ? Then, Bawty, there's some mair mischief in the wind for me ! I see what your frightened looks tell me. That they dinna leave the scent of other deers on their track, but ane that terrifies you, and makes your blood creep. It is hardly possible, ane wad think, that witches could assume the shapes of these bonny harmless creatures ; but their power has come to sic a height hereabouts, that nae man alive can tell what they can do. There's my aunt Nans has already turned me into a gait, then to a gainder, and last of a' into a three-legged stool !

“I am a ruined man, Bawty ! your master is a ruined man, and a lost man, that's far waur. He has sold himself for love to one beautiful creature, the comelies of all the human race. And yet that beautiful creature must be a witch, else how could a' the witches o' Traquair gie me possession o' her ?

“Let me consider and calculate. Now, supposing they are deceiving me—for that's their character ; and

supposing they can never put me in possession of her, then I hae brought myself into a fine scrape. How terrible a thought this is ! Let me see ; is all over ? Is this scroll signed and sealed ; and am I wholly given up to this unknown and untried destiny ?” (Opens his scroll with trembling agitation, and looks over it.) “ No, thanks to the Lord of the universe, I am yet a Christian. The cross stands uncanceled, and there is neither sign nor superscription in my blood. How did this happen ? I had the blood drawn—the pen filled—and the scroll laid out. Let me consider what it was that prevented me ? The deers ? It was, indeed, the two comely deers. What a strange intervention this is ! Ah ! these were no witches ! but some good angels, or happy fays, or guardian spirits of the wild, sent to snatch an abused youth from destruction. Now, thanks be to Heaven, though poor and reduced to the last extremity, I am yet a free man, and in my Maker’s hand. My resolution is changed—my promise is broken, and here I give this mystic scroll to the winds of the glen.

“ Alas, alas ! to what a state sin has reduced me ! Now shall I be tortured by night, and persecuted by day ; changed into monstrous shapes, torn by cats, pricked by invisible bodkins, my heart racked by insufferable pangs of love, until I either lose my reason, and yield to the dreadful conditions held out to me, or aban-

don all hope of earthly happiness, and yield up my life. Oh, that I were as free of sin as that day my father gave me his last blessing ! then might I withstand all their charms and enchantments. But that I will never be. So as I have brewed so must I drink. These were his last words to me, which I may weel remember :—‘ You will have many enemies of your soul to contend with, my son ; for your nearest relations are in compact with the devil ; and as they have hated and persecuted me, so will they hate and persecute you ; and it will only be by repeating your prayers evening and morning, and keeping a conscience void of all offence towards God and towards man, that you can hope to escape the snares that will be laid for you. But the good angels from the presence of the Almighty will, perhaps, guard my poor orphan boy, and protect him from the counsels of the wicked.’

“ Now, in the first place, I have never prayed at all ; and, in the second place, I have sinned so much, that I have long ago subjected myself to their snares, and given myself up for lost. What will become of me ? flight is in vain, for they can fly through the air, and follow me wherever I go. And then, Barbara,—O that lovely and bewitching creature ! in leaving her I would leave life and saul behind !”

After this long and troubled soliloquy, poor Colin burst into tears, and wished himself a dove, or a spar-

row-hawk, or an eagle, to fly away and be seen no more ; but, in either case, to have bonny Barbara for his mate. At this instant Bawty began to cock up his ears, and turn his head first to the one side and then to the other ; and, when Colin looked up, he beheld two hares cowering away from a bush behind him. There was nothing that Colin was so fond of as a chase. He sprung up, pursued the hares, and shouted to his dog, Halloo, halloo ! No, Bawty would not pursue them a foot, but whenever he came to the place where he had seen them, and put his nose to the ground, ran back, hanging his tail, and uttering short barks, as he was wont to do when attacked by witches in the night. Colin's hair rose up on his head, for he instantly suspected that the two hares were Robin Kirkwood and his aunt Nans, watching his motions, and the fulfilment of his promise to them. Colin was horrified, and knew not what to do. He did not try to pray, for he could not ; but he wished, in his heart, that his father's dying prayer for him had been heard.

He rose, and hastened away in the direction contrary to that the hares had taken, as may well be supposed ; and as he jogged along, in melancholy mood, he was aware of two damsels, who approached him slowly and cautiously. They were clothed in white, with garlands on their heads ; and, on their near approach, Colin perceived that one of them was lame, and the other sup-

portent her by the hand. The two comely hinds that had come upon him so suddenly and unexpectedly, and that prevented him, at the very decisive moment, from selling his salvation for sensual enjoyment, instantly came over Colin's awakened recollection, and he was struck with indescribable awe. Bawty was affected somewhat in the same manner with his master. The timidity he manifested was different from that inspired by the attacks of witches and warlocks; he crept close to the ground, and turning his face half away from the radiant objects, uttered a sort of stifled murmur, as if moved both by respect and fear. Colin perceived, from these infallible symptoms, that the beings with whom he was now coming in contact were not the subjects of the Power of Darkness.

He therefore threw his plaid over his shoulder in the true shepherd-style, took his staff below his left arm, so that his right hand might be at liberty to lift his bonnet when the fair damsel accosted him, and, not choosing to advance direct upon them, he paused at a respectful distance straight in their path. When they came within a few paces of him, they turned gently from the path, as if to pass him on the left side, but all the while kept their bright eyes fixed on him, and whispered to each other. Colin was grieved that so much comeliness should pass by without saluting him, and kept his regretful eyes steadily on them. At length they passed,

and one of them called, in a sweet but solemn voice,
“ Ah, Colin Hyslop, Colin Hyslop ! you are on the
braid way for destruction.”

“ How do ye ken that, madam ? ” returned Colin.
“ Do you ca’ the road up the Kirk Rigg the braid way
to destruction ? ”

“ Ay, up the rigg or down the rigg, cross the rigg or
round the rigg, all is the same for you, Colin. You are
a lost man ; and it is a great pity. One single step far-
ther on the path you are now treading, and all is over.”

“ What wad ye hae me to do, sweet madam ? Wad
ye hae me to stand still and starve here on the crown
o’ the Kirk Rigg ? ”

“ Better starve in a dungeon than take the steps you
are about to take. You were at a witch and warlock
meeting yestreen.”

“ It looks like as gin you had been there too, madam,
that you ken sae weel.”

“ Yes, I *was* there, but under concealment, and not
for the purpose of making any such vows and promises
as you made. O wretched Colin Hyslop, what is to
become of you ! ”

“ I did naething, madam, but what I couldna help ;
and my heart is sair for it the day.”

“ Can you lay your hand on that heart and say so ? ”

“ Yes, I can, dear madam, and swear to it too.”

“ Then follow us down to this little green knowe,

and woeuld te us the circumstances of your life, and I will mairk you wi' a secret I heard yestreen."

"Aha, manna, but you is a fairy ring, and I hae gotten me many charms wi' changelings, that I hae muckle need to be at my guard. However, things can hardly be waur wi' me. Lead on, and I shall e'en follow."

The two female figures walked before him to a fairy cavern, on the top of the Feather Hill, and sat down, with their faces towards him, till he recounted the incidents of his life, the outline of which was this :—His father was a sincere adherent of the Reformers, and a good Christian : but poor Colin was born at Taniel-Burn, in the midst of Papists and witches ; and the nearest relation he had, a maternal aunt, was the leading witch of the neighbourhood. Consequently, Colin was nurtured in sin, and inured to iniquity, until all the kindly and humane principles of his nature were erased, or so much distorted, as to appear like their very opposites : and when this was accomplished, his wicked aunt and her associate hags, judging him fairly gained, and without the pale of redemption, began to exercise cantrips, the most comical, and, at the same time, the most refined in cruelty, at his expense ; and at length, on being assured of every earthly enjoyment, he engaged to join their hellish community, only craving three days to study their mysteries, before he should bleed himself, and, with the blood extracted from his veins, extinguish

the sign of the cross, and thereby renounce his hope in mercy, and likewise make some hieroglyphics of strange shapes and mysterious efficacy, and finally subscribe his name to the whole.

When the relation was finished, one of the lovely auditors said,—“ You are a wicked and abandoned person, Colin Hyslop. But you were reared up in iniquity, and know no better ; and the mercy of Heaven is most readily extended to such. You have, besides, some good points in your character still ; for you have told us the truth, however much to your own disadvantage.”

“ Aha, madam ! How do you ken sae weel that I hae been telling you a’ the truth ? ”

“ I know all concerning you better than you do yourself. There is little, very little, of a redeeming nature in your own history ; but you had an upright and devout father, and the seed of the just may not perish for ever. I have been young, and now am old, yet have I never seen the good man forsaken, nor his children cast out as vagabonds in the land of their fathers.”

“ Ah, na, na, madam ! ye canna be auld. It is impossible ! But goodness kens ! there are sad changelings now-a-days. I have seen an auld wrinkled wife blooming o’ernight like a cherub.”

“ Colin, you are a fool ! And folly in youth leads to

misery in old age. But I am your friend, and you have not another on earth this night but myself and my sister here, and one more. Pray, will you keep this little vial, and drink it for my sake?"

"Will it no change me, madam?"

"Yes, it will."

"Then I thank you; but will have nothing to do with it. I have had enow of these kind o' drinks in my life."

"But suppose it change you for the better? Suppose it change you to a new creature?"

"Weel, suppose it should, what will that creature be? Tell me that first. Will it no be a fox, nor a gainer, nor a bearded gait, nor—nor—a three-legged stool, which is no a creature ava?"

"Ah, Colin, Colin!" exclaimed she, smiling through tears, "your own wickedness and unbelief gave the agents of perdition power over you. It is that power which I wish to counteract. But I will tell you nothing more. If you will not take this little vial, and drink it, for my sake,—why, then, let it alone, and follow your own course."

"O dear madam! ye ken little thing about me. I was only joking wi' you, for the sake o' hearing your sweet answers. For were that bit glass fu' o' rank poison, and were it to turn me intil a taed or a worm, I wad drink it aff at your behest. I hae been sae lit-

tle accustomed to hear aught serious or friendly, that my very heart clings to you as it wad do to an angel coming down frae heaven to save me. Ay, and ye said something kind and respectfu' about my auld father too. That's what I hae been as little used to. Ah, but he was a douce man ! Wasna he, mem ?— Drink that bit bottle o' liquor for your sake ! Od, I wish it were fu' to the brim, and that's no what it is by twa-thirds."

"Ay, but it has this property, Colin, that drinking will never exhaust it ; and the langer you drink it, the sweeter it will become."

"Say you sae ? Then here's till ye. We'll see whether drinking winna exhaust it or no."

Colin set the vial to his lips, with intent of draining it ; but the first portion that he swallowed made him change his countenance, and shudder from head to heel.

"Ah ! sweeter did you say, madam ? by the faith of my heart, it has muckle need ; for siccan a potion for bitterness never entered the mouth of mortal man. Oh, I am ruined, poisoned, and undone !"

With that poor Colin drew his plaid over his head, fell flat on his face, and wept bitterly, while his two comely visitants withdrew, smiling at the success of their mission. As they went down by the side of the Feathen Wood, the one said to the other, "Did you

not perceive two of that infatuated community haunting this poor hapless youth to destruction? Let us go and hear their schemes, that we may the better counteract them."

They skimmed over the lea fields, and, in a thicket of brambles, briars, and nettles, they found—not two hares, but the identical Rob Kirkwood, the warlock, and Colin's aunt Nans, in close and unholy consultation. This bush has often been pointed out to me as the scene of that memorable meeting. It perhaps still remains at the side of a little hollow, nigh to the east corner of the Feathen arable fields; and the spots occupied by the witch and warlock, without a green shrub on them, are still as visible as on the day they left them. The two sisters, having chosen a disguise that, like Jack the Giant-Killer's coat of darkness, completely concealed them, heard the following dialogue, from beginning to end.

"Kimmer, I trow the prize is won. I saw his arm bared; the red blood streaming; the scroll in the one hand, and the pen in the other."

"He's ours! he's ours!"

"He's nae mair yours."

"We'll ower the kirkstyle, and away wi' him!"

"I liked not the appearance of yon two pale hinds at such a moment. I wish the fruit of all our pains be not stolen from us when ready for our lord and

master's board. How he will storm and misuse us if this has befallen !”

“What of the two hinds ? What of them, I say ? I like to see blood. It is a beautiful thing blood.”

“Thou art as gross as flesh and blood itself, and hast nothing in thee of the true sublimity of a supernatural being. I love to scale the thundercloud ; to ride on the topmost billow of the storm ; to roost by the cataract, or croon the anthem of hell at the gate of heaven. But *thou* delightest to see blood,—rank, reeking, and baleful Christian blood. What pleasure is in that, dotard ?”

“Humph ! I like to see Christian blood, howsoever. It bodes luck, kimmer—it bodes luck.”

“It bodes that thou art a mere block, Rob Kirkwood ! but it is needless to upbraid thee, senseless as thou art. Listen then to me :—It has been our master's charge to us these seven years to gain that goodly stripling, my nephew ; and you know that you and I engaged to accomplish it ; if we break that engagement, woe unto us ! Our master bore a grudge at his father ; but he particularly desires the son, because he knows that, could we gain him, all the pretty girls of the parish would flock to our standard.—But, Robin Kirkwood, I say, Robin Kirkwood ; what two white birds are these always hopping around us ? I dinna like their looks unco weel. See, the one of

them is lame too ; and they seem to have a language of their own to one another. Let us leave this place, Robin ; my heart is quaking like an aspen."

" Let them hap on. What ill can wee bits o' birdies do till us ? Come, let us try some o' yon cantrips our master learned us. Grand sport yon, Nans !"

" Robin, did not you see that the birds hopped three times round us ! I am afraid we are charmed to the spot."

" Never mind, auld fool ! It's a very good spot.—Some of our cantrips ! some of our cantrips !"

What cantrips they performed is not known ; but, on that day fortnight, the two were found still sitting in the middle of the bush, the two most miserable and disgusting figures that ever shocked humanity. Their cronies came with a hurdle to take them home ; but Nans expired by the way, uttering wild gibberish and blasphemy, and Rob Kirkwood died soon after he got home. The last words he uttered were, " Plenty o' Christian blood soon ! It will be running in streams ! —in streams !—in streams !"

We now return to Colin, who, freed of his two greatest adversaries, now spent his time in a state bordering on happiness, compared with the life he had formerly led. He wept much, staid on the hill by himself, and pondered deeply on something—nobody knew what, and it was believed he did not know well himself. He

was in love—over head and ears in love ; which may account for any thing in man, however ridiculous. He was in love with Barbara Stewart, an angel in loveliness as well as virtue ; but she had hitherto shunned a young man so dissolute and unfortunate in his connexions. To her rejection of his suit were attributed Colin's melancholy and retirement from society ; and it might be partly the cause, but there were other matters that troubled his inmost soul.

Ever since he had been visited by the two mysterious dames, he had kept the vial close in his bosom, and had drunk of the bitter potion again and again. He felt a change within him, a certain renovation of his nature, and a new train of thoughts, to which he was an utter stranger ; yet he cherished them, tasting oftener and oftener his vial of bitterness, and always, as he drank, the liquor increased in quantity.

While in this half-resigned, half-desponding state, he ventured once more to visit Barbara. He thought to himself that he would go and see her, if but to take farewell of her ; for he resolved not to harass so dear a creature with a suit which was displeasing to her. But, to his utter surprise, Barbara received him kindly. His humbled look made a deep impression on her ; and, on taking leave, he found that she had treated him with as much favour as any virtuous maiden could display.

He therefore went home rather too much uplifted in spirit, which his old adversaries, the witches, perceived, and having laid all their snares open to entrap him, they in part prevailed, and he returned, in the moment of temptation, to his old courses. The day after, as he went out to the hill, he whistled and sung,—for he durst not think,—till, behold, at a distance, he saw his two lovely monitors approaching. He was confounded and afraid, for he found his heart was not right for the encounter; so he ran away with all his might, and hid himself in the Feathen Wood.

As soon as he was alone, he took the vial from his bosom, and, wondering, beheld that the bitter liquid was dried up all to a few drops, although the glass was nearly full when he last deposited it in his bosom. He set it eagerly to his lips, lest the last remnant should have escaped him; but never was it so bitter as now; his very heart and spirit failed him, and, trembling, he lay down and wept. He tried again to drain out the dregs of his cup of bitterness; but still, as he drank, it increased in quantity, and became more and more palatable; and he now continued the task so eagerly, that in a few days it was once more nearly full.

The two lovely strangers coming now often in his mind, he regretted running from them, and longed to see them again. So, going out, he sat down within

the fairy ring, on the top of the Feathen Hill, with a sort of presentiment that they would appear to him. Accordingly, it was not long till they made their appearance, but still at a distance, as if travelling along the kirk-road. Colin, perceiving that they were going to pass, without looking his way, thought it his duty to wait on them. He hasted across the moor, and met them ; nor did they now shun him. The one that was lame now addressed him, while she who had formerly accosted him, and presented him with the vial, looked shy, and kept a marked distance, which Colin was exceedingly sorry for, as he loved her best. The other examined him sharply concerning all his transactions since they last met. He acknowledged every thing candidly—the great folly of which he had been guilty, and likewise the great terror he was in of being changed into some horrible bestial creature, by the bitter drug they had given him. “ For d’ye ken, madam,” said he, “ I fand the change beginning within, at the very core o’ the heart, and spreading aye outward and outward, and I lookit aye every minute when my hands and my feet wad change into clutes ; for I expeckit nae less than to have another turn o’ the gait, or some waur thing, kenning how weel I deserved it. And when I saw that I keepit my right proportions, I grat for my ain wickedness, that had before subjected me to such unhallowed influence.”

The two sisters now looked to each other, and a heavenly benevolence shone through the smiles with which that look was accompanied. The lame one said, "Did I not say, sister, that there was some hope?" She then asked a sight of his vial, which he took from his bosom, and put into her hands; and when she had viewed it carefully, she returned it, without any injunction; but taking from her own bosom a medal of pure gold, which seemed to have been dipped in blood, she fastened it round his neck with a chain of steel. "As long as you keep that vial, and use it," said she, "the other will never be taken from you, and with these two you may defy all the Powers of Darkness."

As soon as Colin was alone, he surveyed his purple medal with great earnestness, but could make nothing of it; there was a mystery in the characters and figures which he could not in the least comprehend; yet he kept all that had happened closely concealed; and walked softly.

The witches now found that he was lost to their community, and, enraged beyond measure at being deprived of such a prize, which they had judged fairly their own, and of which their master was so desirous, they now laid a plan to destroy him.

Colin went down to the Castle one night to see Barbara Stewart, who talked to him much of religion and of the Bible; but of these things Colin knew very

little. He engaged, however, to go with her to the house of prayer—not the Popish chapel, where he had once been a most irreverent auditor, but to the Reformed church, which then began to divide the parish, and the pastor of which was a devout man.

On taking leave of Barbara, and promising to attend her on the following Sabbath, a burst of eldritch laughter arose close by, and a voice, with a hoarse and giggling sound, exclaimed, “No sae fast, canny lad—no sae fast. There will maybe be a whipping o’ cripples afore that play be played.”

Barbara consigned them both to the care of the Almighty with great fervency, wondering how they could have been watched and overheard in such a place. Colin trembled from head to foot, for he knew the laugh too well to be that of Mande Stott, the leading witch of the Traquair gang, now that his aunt was removed. He had no sooner crossed the Quair, than, at the junction of a little streamlet, called to this day the Satyr Sike, he was set upon by a countless number of cats, which surrounded him, making the most infernal noises, and putting themselves into the most threatening attitudes. For a good while they did not touch him, but leaped around him, often as high as his throat, screaming most furiously; but at length his faith failed him, and he cried out in utter despair. At that moment, they all closed upon him, some round his neck,

some round his legs, and some endeavouring to tear out his heart and bowels. At length one or two, that came in contact with the medal in his bosom, fled away, howling most fearfully, and did not return. Still he was in great jeopardy of being instantly torn to pieces; on which he flung himself flat on his face in the midst of his devouring enemies, and invoked a sacred name. That moment he felt partial relief, as if some one were driving them off one by one, and on raising his head, he beheld his lovely lame visitant of the mountains, driving these infernals off with a white wand, and mocking their threatening looks and vain attempts to return. "Off with you, poor infatuated wretches!" cried she: "Minions of perdition, off to your abodes of misery and despair! Where now is your boasted whipping of cripples? See if one poor cripple cannot whip you all!"

By this time the monsters had all taken their flight, save one, that had fastened its talons in Colin's left side, and was making a last and desperate effort to reach his vitals; but he, being now freed from the rest, lent it a blow with such good will, as made it speedily desist, and fly tumbling and mewing down the bras. He shrewdly guessed who this inveterate assailant was. Nor was he mistaken; for next day Maude Stott was lying powerless on account of a broken limb, and several of her cronies were in great

torment, having been struck by the white rod of the Lady of the Moon.

But the great Master Fiend, seeing now that his emissaries were all baffled and outdone, was enraged beyond bounds, and set himself with all his wit, and with all his power, to be revenged on poor Colin. As to his power, no one disputed it; but his wit and ingenuity always appear to me to be very equivocal. He tried to assault Colin's humble dwelling that same night, in sundry terrific shapes; but many of the villagers perceived a slender form, clothed in white, that kept watch at his door until the morning twilight. The next day, he haunted him on the hill in the form of a great shaggy bloodhound, infected with madness; but finding his utter inability to touch him, he uttered a howl that made all the hills quake, and, like a flash of lightning, darted into Glendean Banks.

He next set himself to procure Colin's punishment by other means; namely, by the hands of Christian men, the only way now left for him. He accordingly engaged his emissaries to inform against him to holy Mother Church, as a warlock and necromancer. The Crown and the Church had at that time joined in appointing judges of these difficult and interesting questions. The quorum amounted to seven, consisting of the King's Advocate, and an equal number of priests and laymen, all of them in opposition to the principles

of the Reformation, which was at that time obnoxious at court, Colin was seized, arraigned, and lodged in prison at Peebles ; and never was there such clamour and discontent in Strathquair. The young women wept, and tore their hair, for the goodliest lad in the valley ; their mothers scolded ; and the old men scratched their grey polls, bit their lips, and remained quiescent, but were at length compelled to join the combination.

Colin's trial came on ; and his accusers being summoned as witnesses against him, it may well be supposed how little chance he had of escaping, especially as the noted David Beatoun sat that day as judge, a severe and bigoted Papist. There were many things proven against poor Colin,—as much as would have been at one time sufficient to bring all the youth of Traquair to the stake.

For instance, three sportsmen swore, that they had started a large he-fox in the Feathen Wood, and, after pursuing him all the way to Glenrath-hope, with horses and hounds, on coming up, they found Colin Hyslop lying panting in the midst of the hounds, and cowering and endeavouring to pacify them. It was farther deposed, that he had been discovered in the shape of a huge gander sitting on eggs ; and in the shape of a three-legged stool, which, on being tossed about and overturned, as three-legged stools are apt to be, had groan-

ed, and given other symptoms of animation, by which its identity with Colin Hyslop was discovered.

But when they came to the story of a he-goat, which had proceeded to attend the service in the chapel of St John the Evangelist, and which said he-goat proved to be the unhappy delinquent, Beatoun growled with rage and indignation, and said, that such a dog deserved to suffer death by a thousand tortures, and to be excluded from the power of repentance by the instant infliction of them. The most of the judges were not, however, satisfied of the authenticity of this monstrous story, and insisted on examining a great number of witnesses, both young and old, many of whom happened to be quite unconnected with the horrid community of the Traquair witches. Among the rest, a girl, named Tibby Frater, was examined about that, as well as the three-legged stool; and her examination may here be copied verbatim. The querist, who was a cunning man, began as follows:—

“Were you in St John’s Chapel, Isabel, on the Sunday after Easter?”

“Yes.”

“Did you there see a man changed into a he-goat?”

“I saw a gait in the chapel that day.”

“Did he, as has been declared, seem intent on disturbing divine worship?”

"He was playing some pranks. But what else could you expect of a gait?"

"Please to describe what you saw."

"Oo, he was just rampanging about, and thringing folk over. The clerk and the sacristan ran to attack him, but he soon laid them both prostrate. Mess^r John prayed against him, in Latin, they said, and tried to lay him, as if he had been a deil; but he never heedit that, and just rampit on."

"Did he ever come near or molest you in the chapel?"

"Ay, he did that."

"What did he do to you?—describe it all."

"Oo, he didna do that muckle ill, after a'; but if it was the poor young man that was changed, I'll warrant he had nae hand in it, for dearly he paid the kaim. Ere long there were fifty staves raised against him, and he was beaten till there was hardly life left in him."

"And what were the people's reasons for believing that this he-goat and the prisoner were the same?"

"He was found a' wounded and bruised the next day. But, in truth, I believe he never denied these changes wrought on him, to his intimate friends; but we a' ken weel wha it was that effected them. Od help you! ye little ken how we are plaguit and harassed down yonder-about, and what scathe the country suffers, by the emissaries o' Satan! If there be any

among you that ken the true marks o' the beast, you will discern plenty o' them here about, among those that hae been witnessing against this poor abused and unfortunate young man."

The members of the community of Satan were now greatly astounded. Their eyes gleamed with the desire of vengeance, and they gnashed their teeth at the maiden. But the buzz ran through the assembly against them, and execrations were poured from every corner of the crowded court. Cries of—"Plenty o' proof o' what Tibby has said!"—"Let the saddle be laid on the right horse!"—"Down wi' the plagues o' the land!" and many such exclamations, were sent forth by the good people of Traquair. They dared not meddle with the witches at home, because, when any thing was done to disoblige them, the sheep and cattle were seized with new and frightful distempers, the corn and barley were shaken, and the honest people themselves quaked under agues, sweatings, and great horrors of mind. But now, that they had them all collected in a court of justice, and were all assembled themselves, and holy men present, they hoped to bring the delinquents to due punishment at last. Beatoun, however, seemed absolutely bent on the destruction of Colin, alleging, that the depravity of his heart was manifest in every one of his actions during the periods of his metamorphoses, even although he himself had no share

in effecting these metamorphoses ; he therefore sought a verdict against the prisoner, as did also the King's Advocate. Sir James Stuart of Traquair, however, rose up, and spoke with great eloquence and energy in favour of his vassal, and insisted on having his accusers tried face to face with him, when, he had no doubt, it would be seen on which side the sorcery had been exercised. "For I appeal to your honourable judgments," continued he, "if any man would transform himself into a fox, for the sake of being hunted to death, and torn into pieces by hounds ? Neither, I think, would any person choose to translate himself into a gander, for the purpose of bringing out a few worthless goslings ! But, above all, I am morally certain, that no living man would turn himself into a three-legged stool, for no other purpose but to be kicked into the mire, as the evidence shows this stool to have been. And as for a very handsome youth turning himself into a he-goat, in order to exhibit his prowess in outbraving and beating the men of the whole congregation, that would be a supposition equally absurd. But as we have a thousand instances of honest men being affected and injured by spells and enchantments, I give it as my firm opinion, that this young man has been abused grievously in this manner, and that these his accusers, afraid of exposure through his agency, are trying in this way to put him down."

Sir James's speech was received with murmurs of applause through the whole crowded court : but the principal judge continued obstinate, and made a speech in reply. Being a man of a most austere temperament, and as bloody-minded as obstinate, he made no objections to the seizing of the youth's accusers, and called to the officers to guard the door : on which the old sacristan of Traquair remarked aloud, " By my faith in the holy Apostle John, my lord governor, you must be quick in your seizures ; for an ye gie but the witches o' Traquair ten minutes, ye will hae naething o' them but moorfowls and pairicks blattering about the rigging o' the kirk ; and a' the offishers ye hae will neither catch nor keep them."

They were, however, seized and incarcerated. The trials lasted for three days, at which the most amazing crowds attended ; for the evidence was of the most extraordinary nature ever elicited, displaying such a system of diablerie, malevolence, and unheard-of wickedness, as never came to light in a Christian land. Seven women and two men were found guilty, and condemned to be burnt at the stake ; and several more would have shared the same fate, had the private marks, which were then thoroughly and perfectly known, coincided with the evidence produced. This not having been the case, they were banished out of the Scottish dominions, any man being at liberty to shoot them, if

found there under any shape whatever, after sixty-one hours from that date.

There being wise men who attended the courts in those days, called Searchers or Tricars, they were ordered to take Colin into the vestry, (the trials having taken place in a church,) and examine him strictly for the diabolical marks. They could find none; but in the course of their investigation they found the vial in his bosom, as well as the medal that wore the hue of blood, and which was locked to his neck, so that the hands of man could not remove it. They returned to the judge, bearing the vial in triumph, and saying they had found no private mark, as proof of the master he served, but that here was an unguent, which they had no doubt was proof sufficient, and would, if they judged aright, when accompanied by proper incantations, transform a human being into any beast or monster intended. It was handed to the judge, who shook his head, and acquiesced with the searchers. It was then handed around, and Mr Wiseheart, or Wishart, a learned man, deciphered these words on it, in a sacred language,—“The Vial of Repentance.”

The judges looked at one another when they heard these ominous words so unlooked for; and Wishart remarked, with a solemn assurance, that neither the term, nor the cup of bitterness, was likely to be in use

among the slaves of Satan, and the bounden drudges of the land of perdition.

The searchers now begged the Court to suspend their judgment for a space, as the prisoner wore a charm of a bloody hue, which was locked to his body with steel, so that no hands could loose it, and which they judged of far more ominous import than all the other proofs put together. Colin was then brought into Court once more, and the medal examined carefully; and on the one side were engraved, in the same character, two words, the meanings of which were decided to be, "Forgiveness" above, and "Acceptance" below. On the other side was a representation of the Crucifixion, and these words in another language, *Cruci, dum spiro, fido*; which words struck the judges with great amazement. They forthwith ordered the bonds to be taken off the prisoner, and commanded him to speak for himself, and tell, without fear and dread, how he came by these precious and holy bequests.

Colin, who was noted for sincerity and simplicity, began and related the circumstances of his life, his temptations, his follies, and his disregard of all the duties of religion, which had subjected him in no common degree to the charms and enchantments of his hellish neighbours, whose principal efforts and energies seemed to be aimed at his destruction. But when he came to the vision of the fair virgins on the hill, and

of their gracious bequests, that had preserved him thenceforward, both from the devil in person, and from the vengeance of all his emissaries combined, so well did this suit the strenuous efforts then making to obtain popularity for a falling system of faith, that the judges instantly claimed the miracle to their own side, and were clamorous with approbation of his modesty, and cravings of forgiveness for the insults and contumely which they had heaped upon this favourite of Heaven. Barbara Stewart was at this time sitting on the bench close behind Colin, weeping for joy at this favourable turn of affairs, having, for several days previous to that, given up all hopes of his life; when Mr David Beatoun, pointing to the image of the Holy Virgin, asked if the fair dame who bestowed these invaluable and heavenly relics bore any resemblance to that divine figure. Colin, with his accustomed blunt honesty, was just about to answer in the negative, when Barbara exclaimed in a whisper behind him, "Ah! how like!"

"How do you ken, dearest Barbara?" said he, softly, over his shoulder.

"Because I saw her watching your door once when surrounded by fiends—Ah! how like!"

"Ah, how like!" exclaimed Colin, by way of response to one whose opinion was to him as a thing sacred, and not to be disputed. How much hung on

that moment ! A denial might perhaps have still subjected him to obloquy, bonds, and death, but an anxious maiden's ready expedient saved him ; and now it was with difficulty that Mr Wishart could prevent the Catholic part of the throng from falling down and worshipping him, whom they had so lately reviled and accused of the blackest crimes.

Times were now altered with Colin Hyslop. David Beatoun took him to Edinburgh in his chariot, and presented him to the Queen Regent, who put a ring on his right hand, a chain of gold about his neck, and loaded him with her bounty. All the Catholic nobles of the court presented him with valuable gifts, and then he was caused to make the tour of all the rich abbeys of Fife and the Border ; so that, without ever having one more question asked him about his tenets, he returned home the richest man of all Traquair, even richer, as men supposed, than Sir James Stuart himself. He married Barbara Stewart, and purchased the Plora from the female heirs of Alexander Murray, where he built a mansion, planted a vineyard, and lived in retirement and happiness till the day of his death.

I have thus recorded the leading events of this tale, although many of the incidents, as handed down by tradition, are of so heinous a nature as not to bear recital. It has always appeared to me to have been moulded on the bones of some ancient religious alle-

gory, and by being thus transformed into a nursery tale, rendered unintelligible. It would be in vain now to endeavour to restore its original structure, in the same way as Mr Blore can delineate an ancient abbey from the smallest remnant ; but I should like exceedingly to understand properly what was represented by the two lovely and mysterious sisters, one of whom was lame. It is most probable that they were supposed apparitions of renowned female saints ; or perhaps Faith and Charity. This, however, is manifest, that it is a Reformer's tale, founded on a Catholic allegory.

Of the witches of Traquair there are many other traditions extant, as well as many authentic records ; and so far the tale accords with the history of the times. That they were tried and suffered there is no doubt ; and the Devil lost all his popularity in that district ever after, being despised by his friends for his shallow and rash politics, and hooted and held up to ridicule by his enemies. I still maintain, that there has been no great personage since the world was framed, so apt to commit a manifest blunder, and to overshoot his mark, as he is.

CHAPTER V.

SHEEP.

THE sheep has scarcely any marked character, save that of natural affection, of which it possesses a very great share. It is otherwise a stupid, indifferent animal, having few wants, and fewer expedients. The old black-faced, or Forest breed, have far more powerful capabilities than any of the finer breeds that have been introduced into Scotland; and therefore the few anecdotes that I have to relate, shall be confined to them.

So strong is the attachment of sheep to the place where they have been bred, that I have heard of their returning from Yorkshire to the Highlands. I was always somewhat inclined to suspect that they might have been lost by the way. But it is certain, however, that when once one, or a few sheep, get away from the rest of their acquaintances, they return homeward with great eagerness and perseverance. I have lived beside a drove-road the better part of my life,

and many stragglers have I seen bending their steps northward in the spring of the year. A shepherd rarely sees these journeyers twice ; if he sees them, and stops them in the morning, they are gone long before night ; and if he sees them at night, they will be gone many miles before morning. This strong attachment to the place of their nativity, is much more predominant in our old aboriginal breed, than in any of the other kinds with which I am acquainted.

The most singular instance that I know of, to be quite well authenticated, is that of a black ewe, that returned with her lamb from a farm in the head of Glen-Lyon, to the farm of Harehope, in Tweeddale, and accomplished the journey in nine days. She was soon missed by her owner, and a shepherd was dispatched in pursuit of her, who followed her all the way to Crieff, where he turned, and gave her up. He got intelligence of her all the way, and every one told him that she absolutely persisted in travelling on. She would not be turned, regarding neither sheep nor shepherd by the way. Her lamb was often far behind, and she had constantly to urge it on, by impatient bleating. She unluckily came to Stirling on the morning of a great annual fair, about the end of May, and judging it imprudent to venture through the crowd with her lamb, she halted on the north side of the town the whole day, where she was seen by hundreds, lying close

by the road-side. But next morning, when all became quiet, a little after the break of day, she was observed stealing quietly through the town, in apparent terror of the dogs that were prowling about the street. The last time she was seen on the road, was at a toll-bar near St Ninian's; the man stopped her, thinking she was a strayed animal, and that some one would claim her. She tried several times to break through by force when he opened the gate, but he always prevented her, and at length she turned patiently back. She had found some means of eluding him, however, for home she came on a Sabbath morning, the 4th of June; and she left the farm of Lochs, in Glen-Lyon, either on the Thursday afternoon, or Friday morning, a week and two days before. The farmer of Harehope paid the Highland farmer the price of her, and she remained on her native farm till she died of old age, in her seventeenth year.

There is another peculiarity in the nature of sheep, of which I have witnessed innumerable examples. But as they are all alike, and show how much the sheep is a creature of habit, I shall only relate one:

A shepherd in Blackhouse bought a few sheep from another in Crawmel, about ten miles distant. In the spring following, one of the ewes went back to her native place, and yeaned on a wild hill, called Crawmel Craig. One day, about the beginning of July follow-

ing, the shepherd went and brought home his ewe and lamb—took the fleece from the ewe, and kept the lamb for one of his stock. The lamb lived and thrived, became a hog and a gimmer, and never offered to leave home; but when three years of age, and about to have her first lamb, she vanished; and the morning after, the Crawmel shepherd, in going his rounds, found her with a new-yearned lamb on the very gair of the Crawmel Craig, where she was lambed herself. She remained there till the first week of July, the time when she was brought a lamb herself, and then she came home with hers of her own accord; and this custom she continued annually with the greatest punctuality as long as she lived. At length her lambs, when they came of age, began the same practice, and the shepherd was obliged to dispose of the whole breed.

With regard to the natural affection of this animal, stupid and actionless as it is, the instances that might be mentioned are without number. When one loses its sight in a flock of short sheep, it is rarely abandoned to itself in that hapless and helpless state. Some one always attaches itself to it, and by bleating calls it back from the precipice, the lake, the pool, and all dangers whatever. There is a disease among sheep, called by shepherds the Breakshugh, a deadly sort of dysentery, which is as infectious as fire, in a flock. Whenever a sheep feels itself seized by this, it instant-

ly withdraws from all the rest, shunning their society with the greatest care; it even hides itself, and is often very hard to be found. Though this propensity can hardly be attributed to natural instinct, it is, at all events, a provision of nature of the greatest kindness and beneficence.

Another manifest provision of nature with regard to these animals, is, that the more inhospitable the land is on which they feed, the greater their kindness and attention to their young. I once herded two years on a wild and bare farm called Willenslee, on the border of Mid-Lothian, and of all the sheep I ever saw, these were the kindest and most affectionate to their young. I was often deeply affected at scenes which I witnessed. We had one very hard winter, so that our sheep grew lean in the spring, and the thwarter-ill (a sort of paralytic affection) came among them, and carried off a number. Often have I seen these poor victims when fallen down to rise no more, even when unable to lift their heads from the ground, holding up the leg, to invite the starving lamb to the miserable pittance that the udder still could supply. I had never seen aught more painfully affecting.

It is well known that it is a custom with shepherds, when a lamb dies, if the mother have a sufficiency of milk, to bring her from the hill, and put another lamb to her. This is done by patting the skin of the

dead lamb upon the living one ; the ewe immediately acknowledges the relationship, and after the skin has warmed on it, so as to give it something of the smell of her own progeny, and it has sucked her two or three times, she accepts and nourishes it as her own ever after. Whether it is from joy at this apparent reanimation of her young one, or because a little doubt remains on her mind which she would fain dispel, I cannot decide ; but, for a number of days, she shows far more fondness, by bleating, and caressing, over this one, than she did formerly over the one that was really her own.

But this is not what I wanted to explain ; it was, that such sheep as thus lose their lambs, must be driven to a house with dogs, so that the lamb may be put to them ; for they will only take it in a dark confined place. But at Willenslee, I never needed to drive home a sheep by force, with dogs, or in any other way than the following : I found every ewe, of course, standing hanging her head over her dead lamb, and having a piece of twine with me for the purpose, I tied that to the lamb's neck, or foot, and trailing it along, the ewe followed me into any house or fold that I chose to lead her. Any of them would have followed me in that way for miles, with her nose close on the lamb, which she never quitted for a moment, except to chase my dog, which she would not suffer to walk

near me. I often, out of curiosity, led them in to the side of the kitchen fire by this means, into the midst of servants and dogs; but the more that dangers multiplied around the ewe, she clung the closer to her dead offspring, and thought of nothing whatever but protecting it.

One of the two years while I remained on this farm, a severe blast of snow came on by night about the latter end of April, which destroyed several scores of our lambs; and as we had not enow of twins and odd lambs for the mothers that had lost theirs, of course we selected the best ewes, and put lambs to them. As we were making the distribution, I requested of my master to spare me a lamb for a hawked ewe which he knew, and which was standing over a dead lamb in the head of the hope, about four miles from the house. He would not do it, but bid me let her stand over her lamb for a day or two, and perhaps a twin would be forthcoming. I did so, and faithfully she did stand to her charge; so faithfully, that I think the like never was equalled by any of the woolly race. I visited her every morning and evening, and for the first eight days never found her above two or three yards from the lamb; and always, as I went my rounds, she eyed me long ere I came near her, and kept tramping with her foot, and whistling through her nose, to frighten away the dog; he got a regular chase twice a-day as I pass-

ed by: but, however excited and fierce a ewe may be, she never offers any resistance to mankind, being perfectly and meekly passive to them. The weather grew fine and warm, and the dead lamb soon decayed, which the body of a dead lamb does particularly soon; but still this affectionate and desolate creature kept hanging over the poor remains with an attachment that seemed to be nourished by hopelessness. It often drew the tears from my eyes to see her hanging with such fondness over a few bones, mixed with a small portion of wool. For the first fortnight she never quit-
ted the spot, and for another week she visited it every morning and evening, uttering a few kindly and heart-piercing bleats each time; till at length every remnant of her offspring vanished, mixing with the soil, or wafted away by the winds.

CHAPTER VI.

PRAYERS.

THERE is, I believe, no class of men professing the Protestant faith, so truly devout as the shepherds of Scotland. They get all the learning that the parish schools afford ; are thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures ; deeply read in theological works, and really, I am sorry to say it, generally much better informed on these topics than their masters. Every shepherd is a man of respectability—he must be so, else he must cease to be a shepherd. His master's flock is entirely committed to his care, and if he does not manage it with constant attention, caution, and decision, he cannot be employed. A part of the stock is his own, however, so that his interest in it is the same with that of his master ; and being thus the most independent of men, if he cherishes a good behaviour, and the most insignificant if he loses the esteem of his employers, he has every motive for maintaining an unimpeachable character.

It is almost impossible, also, that he can be other than a religious character, being so much conversant with the Almighty in his works, in all the goings-on of nature, and in his control of the otherwise resistless elements. He feels himself a dependent being, morning and evening, on the great Ruler of the universe; he holds converse with him in the cloud and the storm—on the misty mountain and the darksome waste—in the whirling drift and the overwhelming thaw—and even in voices and sounds that are only heard by the howling cliff or solitary dell. How can such a man fail to be impressed with the presence of an eternal God, of an omniscient eye, and an almighty arm?

The position generally holds good; for, as I have said, the shepherds are a religious and devout set of men, and among them the antiquated but delightful exercise of family worship is never neglected. It is always gone about with decency and decorum; but formality being a thing despised, there is no composition that I ever heard so truly original as these prayers occasionally are; sometimes for rude eloquence and pathos, at other times for a nondescript sort of pomp, and not unfrequently for a plain and somewhat unbecoming familiarity.

One of the most notable men for this sort of family eloquence was Adam Scott, in Upper Dalglish. I had an uncle who herded with him, from whom I heard

many quotations from Scott's prayers :—a few of them are as follows.

"We particularly thank thee for thy great goodness to Meg, and that ever it came into your head to take any thought of sic an useless baw-waw as her." (This was a little girl that had been somewhat miraculously saved from drowning.)

"For thy mercy's sake—for the sake of thy poor sinfu' servants that are now addressing thee in their ain shilly-shally way, and for the sake o' mair than we dare weel name to thee, hae mercy on Rob. Ye ken yoursell he is a wild mischievous callant, and thinks nae mair o' committing sin than a dog does o' licking a dish; but put thy hook in his nose, and thy bridle in his gab, and gar him come back to thee wi' a jerk that he'll no forget the langest day he has to leave."

"Dinna forget poor Jamie, wha's far away frae amang us the night. Keep thy arm o' power about him, and O, I wish ye wad endow him wi' a little spunk and smeddum to act for himsell. For if ye dinna, he'll be but a bauchle in this world, and a backsitter in the neist."

"We desire to be submissive to thy will and pleasure at a' times; but our desires are like new-bridled colts, or dogs that are first laid to the brae—they run wild frae under our control. Thou hast added one to our family—so has been thy will; but it would never

has been mine. If it's of thee, do thou bless and prosper the connexion; but if the fool hath done it ~~out of~~ carnal desire, against all reason and credit, may the could rainy cloud of adversity settle on his habitation, till he shiver in the flame that his folly hath kindled! (I think this was said to be in allusion to the marriage of one of his sons.)

"We're a' like hawks, we're a' like snails, we're a' like slogie riddles;—like hawks to do evil, like snails to do good, and like slogie riddles, that let through the good, and keep the bad."

"Bring down the tyrant and his lang neb; for he has done muckle ill the year, and gie him a cup o' thy wrath, and gin he winna tak that, gie him keltie!" (*Keltie* signifies double, or two cups. This was an occasional petition for one season only, and my uncle never could comprehend what it meant.)

The general character of Scott was one of decision and activity; constant in the duties of religion; but not over strict with regard to some of its moral precepts.

I have heard the following petitions sundry times in the family prayers of an old relation of my own, long since gone to his rest.

"And mairower and aboon, do thou bless us a' wi' thy best worldly blessings—wi' bread for the belly, and thrinking for the back, a lang stride and a clear an' night. Keep us from a' proud pressing and upsetting—frow

feet slips, and stray steps, and from all unnecessary trouble."

But, in generalities, these prayers are never half so original as when they come to particular incidents that affect only the petitioners; for some things happen daily, which they deem it their bounden duty to remember before their Maker, either by way of petition, confession, or thanksgiving. The following was told to me as a part of the same worthy old man's prayer occasionally, for some weeks before he left a master, in whose father's service and his own the decayed shepherd had spent the whole of his life.

"Bless my master and his family with thy best blessing in Christ Jesus. Prosper all his worldly concerns, especially that valuable part which is committed to my care. I have worn out my life in the service of him and his fathers, and thou knowest that I have never bowed a knee before thee without remembering them. Thou knowest, also, that I have never staid night's rest, nor day's comfort, when put in competition with their interest. The foulest days and the stormiest nights were to me as the brightest of summer; and if he has not done well in casting out his aid-servant, do thou forgive him. I forgive him with all my heart, and will never cease to pray for him; but when the hard storms o' winter come, may he miss the braid bonnet and the grey head, and say to himself, 'I

wish to God that my auld herd had been here yet! I ken o' neither house nor habitation this night, but for the sake o' them amang us that canna do for themsells, I ken thou wilt provide ane ; for though thou hast tried me with hard and sair adversities, I have had more than my share of thy mercies, and thou kens better than I can tell thee that thou hast never bestowed them on an unthankful heart."

This is the sentence, exactly as it was related to me, but I am sure it is not correct ; for, though very like his manner, I never heard him come so near the English language in one sentence in my life. I once heard him say, in allusion to a chapter he had been reading about David and Goliath, and just at the close of his prayer : " And when our besetting sins come bragging and blowsterring upon us, like Gully o' Gath, O enable us to fling off the airmer and hairnishing o' the law, whilk we haena proved, and whup up the simple sling o' the gospel, and nail the smooth stanes o' redeeming grace into their foreheads."

Of all the compositions, for simple pathos, that I ever saw or heard, his prayer, on the evening of that day on which he buried his only son, excelled ; but at this distance of time, it is impossible for me to do it justice ; and I dare not take it on me to garble it. He began the subject of his sorrows thus :—

" Thou hast seen meet, in thy wise providence, to

remove the staff out of my right hand, at the very time when, to us poor sand-blind mortals, it appeared that I stood maist in need o't. But O it was a sicker ane, and a sure ane, and a dear ane to my heart! and how I'll climb the steep hill o' auld age and sorrow without it; thou mayst ken, but I dinna."

His singing of the psalms surpassed all exhibitions that ever were witnessed of a sacred nature. He had not the least air of sacred music; there was no attempt at it; it was a sort of recitative of the most grotesque kind; and yet he delighted in it, and sung far more verses every night than is customary. The first time I heard him, I was very young; but I could not stand it, and leaned myself back into a bed, and laughed till my strength could serve me no longer. He had likewise an out-of-the-way custom, in reading a portion of Scripture every night, of always making remarks as he went on. And such remarks! One evening I heard him reading a chapter—I have forgot where it was—but he came to words like these: "And other nations, whom the great and noble Asnapper brought over"—John stopped short, and, considering for a little, says: "Asnapper! whaten a king was he that? I dinna mind o' ever hearing tell o' him afore."—"I dinna ken," said one of the girls; "but he has a queer name."—"It is something like a goolly knife," said a younger one. "Whisht, dame," said John, and then

went on with the chapter. I believe it was about the fourth or fifth chapter of Eara. He seldom, for a single night, missed a few observations of the same sort.

Another night, not long after the time above noticed, he was reading of the feats of one Sanballat, who set himself against the building of the second temple; on closing the Bible John uttered a long hemh! and then I knew there was something forthcoming. "He has been another nor a gude ane that," added he; "I haec nae brow o' their Sandy-ballet."

Upon another occasion he stopped in the middle of a chapter and uttered his "hemh!" of disapproval, and then added, "If it had been the Lord's will, I think they might haec left out that verse."—"It hasna been his will, though," said one of the girls.—"It seems sae," said John. I have entirely forgot what he was reading about, and am often vexed at having forgot the verse that John wanted expunged from the Bible. It was in some of the minor prophets.

There was another time he came to his brother-in-law's house, where I was then living, and John being the oldest man, the Bible was laid down before him to make family worship. He made no objections, but began, as was always his custom, by asking a blessing on their devotions; and when he had done, it being customary for those who make family worship to sing straight through the Psalms from beginnaing to end,

John says, "We'll sing in your ordinary. Where is it?"—"We do not always sing in one place," said the goodman of the house. "Na, I daresay no, or else ye'll make that place threadbare," said John, in a short crabbed style, manifestly suspecting that his friend was not regular in his family devotions. This piece of sharp wit after the worship was began had to me an effect highly ludicrous.

When he came to give out the chapter, he remarked, that there would be no ordinary there either, he supposed. "We have been reading in Job for a lang time," said the goodman. "How lang?" said John slyly, as he turned over the leaves, thinking to catch his friend at fault. "O, I dinna ken that," said the other; "but there's a mark laid in that will tell you the bit."—"If you hae read vera lang in Job," says John, "you will hae made him threadbare too, for the mark is only at the ninth chapter." There was no answer, so he read on. In the course of the chapter he came to these words—"Who commandeth the sun, and it riseth not."—"I never heard of Him doing that," says John. "But Job, honest man, maybe means the darkness that was in the land o' Egypt. It wad be a fearsome thing an the sun wadna till rise." A little farther on he came to these words—"Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south."—"I hae often wondered at that verse," says John. "Job has

been a grand philosopher! The Pleiades are the Seven Stars;—I ken them; and Orion, that's the King's Edward; but I'm never sure about Arcturus. "I fancy he's ane o' the plennits, or maybe him that hants the Gowden Plough."

"On reading the last chapter of the book of Job, when he came to the enumeration of the patriarch's live stock, he remarked, "He has had an unco sight o' creatures. Fourteen thousand sheep! How many was that?" "He has had seven hundred scores," said one. "Ay," said John, "it was an unco swarm o' creatures. There wad be a dreadful confusion at his clippings and spellings. Six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand she-asses. What, in the wide world, did he do wi' a' thae creatures? Wad it no hae been mair purpose-like if he had had them a' milk kye?" "Who wad he hae gotten to have milked them?" said one of the girls. "It's vera true," said John. "One time, during a long and severe lying storm of snow, in allusion to some chapter he had been reading, he prayed as follows: (This is from heartay.) "Is the whiteness of desolation to lie still on the mountains of our land for ever? Is the earthly hope o' thy servants to perish frae the face of the earth? The flocks on a thousand hills are thine, and their lives or deaths wad be naething to thee—thou wad neither be the richer nor the poorer; but it is a great matter to us. Have pity,

them, on the lives o' thy creatures, for beast and body
are a' thy handywork, and send us the little wee cladd
out o' the sea like a man's hand, to spread and darken,
and poue and plash, till the green-gleesome face o' na-
ture since mair appear."

During the smearing season one year, it was agreed
that each shepherd, young and old, should ask a bless-
ing and return thanks at meal-time, in his turn, begin-
ning at the eldest, and going off at the youngest; that,
as there was no respect of persons with God, so there
should be none shown among neighbours: John being
the eldest, the graces began with him, and went decent-
ly on till they came to the youngest, who obstinately
refused. Of course it devolved again on John, who,
taking off his broad bonnet, thus addressed his Maker
with great fervency:—

"O our gracious Lord and Redeemer, thou hast said,
in thy blessed word, that those who are ashamed of thee
and thy service, of them thou wilt be ashamed when
thou comest into thy kingdom. Now, all that we hum-
bly beg of thee at this time is, that Geordie may not
be reckoned among that unhappy number. Open the
poor child's heart and his een to a sight o' his lost con-
dition, and though he be that proud that he'll no ask a
blessing o' thee, neither for himsell nor us, do thou
grant us a' thy blessing ne'ertheless, and him among the
rest, for Christ's sake. Amen"

The young man felt the rebuke very severely, his face grew as red as flame, and it was several days before he could assume his usual hilarity. Had I lived with John a few years, I could have picked up his remarks on the greater part of the Scriptures, for to read and not make remarks was out of his power. The story of Ruth was a great favourite with him—he often read it to his family of a Sabbath evening, as “a good lesson on naturality;” but he never failed making the remark, that “it was no more nor decency in her to creep in beside the dome man’s, the night-time when he was sleeping.”

The young man felt the reproach very severely. He grew as red as flame, and it was several days before he could assume his usual mien. I did not live with John a few years. I could have picked up his remarks on the greater part of the specimens for to read and not make remarks was one of his powers. The story it hath was a great testimony with him—no other read

CHAPTER VII.

ODD CHARACTERS.

Many single anecdotes of country life might be collected—enough, perhaps, to form a volume as amusing as others connected with higher names—but in this place I shall confine myself to a few, of which several relate to the same person, and are thus illustrative of individual character. The first that claim attention are those concerning a man very famous in his own sphere, an ancestor of my own,—the redoubted

WILL O' PHAUP.

WILL O' PHAUP, one of the genuine Laidlaws of Craik, was born at that place in 1691. He was shepherd in Phaup for fifty-five years. For feats of frolic, strength, and agility, he had no equal in his day. In the hall of the laird, at the farmer's ingle, and in the shepherd's cot, Will was alike a welcome guest; and in whatever company he was, he kept the whole in one

roar of merriment. In Will's days, brandy was the common drink in this country; as for whisky, it was like silver in the days of Solomon, nothing accounted of. Good black French brandy was the constant beverage; and a heavy neighbour Will was on it. Many a hard house he had about Moffat, and many a race he ran, generally for wagers of so many pints of brandy; and in all his life he never was beat. He once ran at Moffat for a wager of five guineas, which one of the chiefs of the Johnstons betted on his head. His opponent was a celebrated runner from Crawford-Muir, of the name of Blaikley, on whose head, or rather on whose feet, a Captain Douglas had wagered. Will knew nothing of the match till he went to Moffat, and was very averse to it. "No, that he was ony way fear'd for the chap," he said; "but he had on a his ill-day claes, and as many leddies and gentlemen was to be there to see the race, he didna like to appear afore them like an assie whelp," &c.

However, he was urged, and obliged to go out and strip; and, as he told it, "a poor figure I made beside the chield wi' his grand ruffled sark. I was sae affrighted at thinking that Will o' Phaup should hae made sic a dirty shabby appearance afore sae mony girt fells and bonny leddies, that not a fit I could rin mair nor I had been a diker. The race was down on Annan-side, and jimply a mile out and in; and, at the very first, the

man wi' the ruffled sark flew off like a hare, and left poor Will o' Phaup to come waughling up ahint him like a singit car, wi' his dir sark and his cloutit breeks. I had neither heart nor power, till a very queer accident befell me; for, Scots grund! disna the tying o' my cloutit breeks brak loose, and in a moment they war at my heels, and there was I standing like a hapshekel'd stail! "Off wi' them, Phaup! Off wi' them!" cries aie. "Od, sir, I just sprang out o' them; and that instant I fand my spirits rise to the proper pitch. The child was clean afore me, but I fand that if he war a yeagle I wad o'ertak him, for I scarcely kenn'd whether I wad be touching the grund or fleeing in the air, and as I came by Mr Waloh, I heard him saying, "Phaup has him, yet!" for he saw Blaikley falling. I got by him, but I had not muckle to brag o', for he keepit the step on me till within a gun-shot o' the starting-post.

"Then there was sic a fraze about me by the winning party, and naething wad serve them but that I should dine wi' them in the public room." "Na, fiend be there then, Mr Johnston," says I, "for though yoor loddies only leuch at my accident, if I war to dinner wi' them in this state, I kenn'd how they might tak it."

When Will was a young lad, only sixteen years of age, and the very first year he was in Phaup, his master betted the pries of his whole drove of Phaup hogs on his head, at a race with an Englishman on Stag-

shawbank. James Anderson, Esq. of Ettrickhall, was then farmer of Phaup, and he had noted at the shedding, before his young shepherd left home, that whenever a sheep got by wrong, he never did more than run straight after it, lay hold of it by sheer speed, and bring it back in his arms. So the laird having formed high ideas of Will's swiftness, without letting him know of the matter, first got an English gentleman into a heat, by bragging the English runners with Scots ones, and then proffered betting the price of his 300 wedder hogs, that he had a poor starved barefooted boy who was helping to drive them,—whom he believed to be about the worst runner in Scotland,—who would yet beat the best Englishman that could be found in Stagshawbank-fair.

The Englishman's national pride was touched, as well it might, his countrymen being well known as the superior runners. The bet was taken, and Will won it with the greatest ease, for his master, without being made aware of the stake for which he ran. This he never knew till some months afterwards, that his master presented him with a guinea, a pair of new shoes, and a load of oatmeal, for winning him the price of the Phaup hogs. Will was exceedingly proud of the feat he had performed, as well as of the present, which, he remarked, was as much to him as the price of the hogs was to his master. From that day forth he was never beat at a fair race.

He never went to Moffat, that the farmers did not get him into their company, and then never did he get home to Phaup sober. The mad feats which he then performed, were, for an age, the standing jokes of the country, and many of his sayings settled into regular proverbs or by-words. His great oath was "Scots grund!" And "Scots grund, quo' Will o' Phaup," is a standing exclamation to this day—"One plash more, quo' Will o' Phaup," is another,—and there are many similar ones. The last mentioned had its origin in one of those Moffat houses, from which the farmer of Salecouth and Will were returning by night greatly inebriated, the former riding, and Will running by his side. Moffat water being somewhat flooded, the farmer proposed taking Laidlaw on the horse behind him. Will sprang on, but, as he averred, never got seated right, till the impatient animal plunged into the water, and the two friends came off, and floated down the river, hanging by one another. The farmer got to his feet first, but in pulling out Will, lost his equilibrium a second time, and plunging headlong into the stream, down he went. Will was then in the utmost perplexity, for, with the drink and ducking together, he was quite benumbed, and the night was as dark as pitch; he ran down the side of the stream to succour his friend, and losing all sight of him, he knew not what to do; but hearing a great plunge, he made to-

wards the place, calling out, "One plash more, sir, and I have you—One plash more, quo' Will o' Phann!" but all was silent! "Scots grund! quo' Will o' Phann—a man drown'd, and me here!" Will ran to a stream, and took his station in the middle of the water, in hopes of feeling his drowning friend come against his legs;—but the farmer got safely out by himself.

There was another time at Moffat, that he was taken in, and had to pay a dinner and drink for a whole large party of gentlemen. I have forgot how it happened, but think it was by a wager. He had not only to part with all his money, but had to pawn his whole stock of sheep. He then came home with a heavy heart, told his wife what he had done, and that he was a ruined man. She said, that since he had saved the cow, they would do well enough.

The money was repaid afterwards, so that Will did not actually lose his stock; but after that he went seldomer to Moffat. He fell upon a much easier plan of getting sport; for, at that period, there were constantly bands of smugglers passing from the Solway, through the wild region where he lived, towards the Lothians. From these Will purchased occasionally a stock of brandy, and then the gentlemen and farmers came all and drank with him, paying him at the enormous rate of a shilling per bottle, all lesser measures

being despised, and out of repute, at Phaup. It became a place of constant rendezvous, but a place where they drank too deep to be a safe place for gentlemen to meet. There were two rival houses of Andersons at that time that never ceased quarrelling, and they were wont always to come to Phaup with their swords by their sides. Being all exceedingly stout men, and equally good swordsmen, it may easily be supposed they were dangerous neighbours to meet in such a wild remote place. Accordingly, there were many quarrels and bloody bouts there as long as the Andersons possessed Phaup; after which, the brandy system was laid aside. Will twice saved his master's life in these affrays;—once, when he had drawn on three of the Amoses, tenants of Potburn, and when they had mastered his sword, broken it, and were dragging him to the river by the neckcloth. Will knocked down one, cut his master's neckcloth, and defended him stoutly till he gathered his breath; and then the two jointly did thrash the Amoses to their heart's satisfaction! And another time, from the sword of Michael of Tushielaw; but he could not help the two fighting a duel afterwards, which was the cause of much mischief, and many heart-burnings, among these haughty relatives.

Will and his master once fought a battle themselves two, up in a wild glen called Phaup Coom. They differed about a young horse, which the Laird had sent

these to guess, and which he thought had not been well treated; and so bitter did the recriminations grow between them, that the Laird threatened to send Will to hell. Will defied him; on which he attacked him furiously with his cane, while the shepherd defended himself as resolutely with his staff. The combat was exceedingly sharp and severe; but the gentleman was too scientific for the shepherd, and hit him many blows about the head and shoulders, while Will could not hit him once, "all that he could thrash on." The latter was determined, however, not to yield, and fought on, although, as he termed it, "the blood began to blind his eyes." He tried several times to close with his master, but found him so complete in both his defence and offence, that he never could accomplish it, but always suffered for his temerity. At length he "jerked down his head, took a lounder across the shoulders, and, in the meantime, hit his master across the chin." This ungentlemanly blow quite paralysed the Laird, and the cane dropped out of his hand, on which Will closed with him, mastered him with ease, laying him down, and holding him fast;—but all that he could do, he could not pacify him,—he still swore he would have his heart's blood. Will had then no resource, but to spring up, and bound away to the hill. The Laird pursued for a time, but he might as well have tried to catch a ree-buck; so he went back to

Phaup, took his horse in silence, and rode away home. Will expected a summons of removal next day, or next term at the farthest; but Mr Anderson took no notice of the affair, nor ever so much as mentioned it again.

Will had many pitched battles with the bands of smugglers, in defence of his master's goods, for they never missed unloading on the lands of Phaup, and turning their horses to the best grass they could find. According to his account, these fellows were excruciatingly lawless, and accounted nothing of takings from the country people whatever they needed in emergencies. The gipsies, too, were then accustomed to traverse the country in bands of from twenty to forty, and were no better than freebooters. But to record every one of Will o' Phaup's heroic feats, would require a volume. I shall, therefore, only mention one trait more of his character, which was this—

He was the last man of this wild region, who heard, saw, and conversed with the Fairies; and that not once or twice, but at sundry times and seasons. The shieling at which Will lived for the better part of his life, at Old Upper Phaup, was one of the most lonely and dismal situations that ever was the dwelling of human creatures. I have often wondered, how such a man could live so long, and rear so numerous and respectable a family, in such a habitation. It is on the very

outskirts of Ettrick Forest, quite out of the range of social intercourse, a fit retirement for lawless banditti, and a genial one for the last retreat of the spirits of the glen—before taking their final leave of the land of their love, in which the light of the gospel then grew too bright for their tiny moonlight forms. There has Will beheld them riding in long and beautiful array, by the light of the moon, and even in the summer twilight; and there has he seen them sitting in seven circles, in the bottom of a deep ravine, drinking nectar out of cups of silver and gold, no bigger than the dew-cup flower; and there did he behold their wild unearthly eyes, all of one bright sparkling blue, turned every one upon him at the same moment, and heard their mysterious whisperings, of which he knew no word, save now and then the repetition of his own name, which was always done in a strain of pity. Will was coming from the hill one dark misty evening in winter, and for a good while, imagined he heard a great gabbling of children's voices, not far from him, which still grew more and more audible; it being before sunset, he had no spark of fear, but set about investigating whence the sounds and laughter proceeded. He, at length, discovered that they issued from a deep cleugh not far distant, and thinking it was a band of gipsies, or some marauders, he laid down his bonnet and plaid, and creeping softly over the heath, reached the brink of

the precipice, peeped over, and to his utter astonishment, beheld the Fairies sitting in seven circles, on a green spot in the bottom of the dell, where no green spot ever was before. They were apparently eating and drinking; but all their motions were so quick and momentary, he could not well say what they were doing. Two or three at the queen's back appeared to be baking bread. The party consisted wholly of ladies, and their numbers quite countless—dressed in green pollonians, and grass-green bonnets on their heads. He perceived at once, by their looks, their giggling, and their peals of laughter, that he was discovered. Still fear took no hold of his heart, for it was daylight, and the blessed sun was in heaven, although obscured by clouds; till at length he heard them pronounce his own name twice; Will then began to think it might not be quite so safe to wait till they pronounced it a third time, and at that moment of hesitation it first came into his mind that it was All Hallow Eve! There was no farther occasion to warn Will to rise and run; for he well knew the Fairies were privileged, on that day and night, to do what seemed good in their own eyes. "His hair," he said, "stood all up like the birses on a sow's back, and every bit o' his body, outside and in, prinkled as it had been brunt wi' nettles." He ran home as fast as his feet could carry him, and greatly were his children astonish-

ed (for he was then a widower) to see their father come running like a madman, without either his bonnet or plaid. He assembled them to prayers, and shut the door, but did not tell them what he had seen for several years.

Another time he followed a whole troop of them up a wild glen called Entertrony, from one end to the other, without ever being able to come up with them, although they never appeared to be more than twenty paces in advance. Neither were they flying from him; for instead of being running at their speed, as he was doing, they seemed to be standing in a large circle. It happened to be the day after a Moffat fair, and he supposed them to be a party of his neighbours returning from it, who wished to lead him a long chase before they suffered themselves to be overtaken. He heard them speaking, singing, and laughing; and being a man so fond of sociality, he exerted himself to come up with them, but to no purpose. Several times did he hail them, and desire them to halt, and tell him the news of the fair; but whenever he shouted, in a moment all was silent, until in a short time he heard the same noise of laughing and conversation at some distance from him. Their talk, although Will could not hear the words of it distinctly, was evidently very animated, and he had no doubt they were recounting their feats at the fair. This always excited his curiosity afresh, and he made

every exertion to overtake the party; and when he judged, from the sounds, that he was close upon them, he sent forth his stentorian holla—"Stop, lads, and tell us the news o' the fair!" which produced the same effect of deep silence for a time. When this had been repeated several times, and after the usual pause, the silence was again broken by a peal of oldrich laughter, that seemed to spread along the skies over his head. Will began to suspect that that unearthly laugh was not altogether unknown to him. He stood still to consider, and that moment the laugh was repeated, and a voice out of the crowd called to him, in a shrill laughing tone, "Ha, ha, ha! Will o' Phaup, look to your ain hearth-stane the night." Will again threw off every encumbrance, and fled home to his lonely cot, the most likely spot in the district for the Fairies to congregate; but it is wonderful what an idea of safety is conferred by the sight of a man's own hearth and family circle.

When Will had become a right old man, and was sitting on a little green hillock at the end of his house, one evening, resting himself, there came three little boys up to him, all exactly like one another, when the following short dialogue ensued between Will and them.

"Good e'en t'ye, Will Laidlaw."

"Good e'en t'ye, creatures. Where ir ye gaun this gate?"

"Can ye gie us up-putting for the night?"

"I think three siccan bits o' shreds o' hurchins wi-na be ill to put up.—Where came ye frae?"

"Frae a place that ye dianna ken. But we are come on a commission to you."

"Come away in then, and tak sic cheer as we hae."

Will rose and led the way into the house, and the little boys followed; and as he went, he said carelessly, without looking back, "What's your commission to me, bairns?" He thought they might be the sons of some gentleman, who was a guest of his master's.

"We are sent to demand a silver key that you have in your possession."

Will was astounded; and standing still to consider of some old transaction, he said, without lifting his eyes from the ground,—

"A silver key? In God's name, where came ye from?"

There was no answer, on which Will wheeled round, and round, and round; but the tiny beings were all gone, and Will never saw them more. At the name of God, they vanished in the twinkling of an eye. It is curious that I never should have heard the secret of the silver key, or indeed, whether there was such a thing or not.

But Will once saw a vision which was more unaccountable than this still. On his way from Moffat one

time, about midnight, he perceived a light very near to the verge of a steep hill, which he knew perfectly well, on the lands of Selcouth. The light appeared exactly like one from a window, and as if a lamp moved frequently within. His path was by the bottom of the hill, and the light being almost close at the top, he had at first no thoughts of visiting it: but as it shone in sight for a full mile, his curiosity to see what it was continued still to increase as he approached nearer. At length, on coming to the bottom of the steep bank, it appeared so bright and near, that he determined to climb the hill and see what it was. There was no moon, but it was a starry night and not very dark, and Will clambered up the precipice, and went straight to the light, which he found to proceed from an opening into a cavern, of about the dimensions of an ordinary barn. The opening was a square one, and just big enough for a man to creep in. Will set in his head, and beheld a row of casks from one end to the other, and two men with long beards, buff belts about their waists, and torches in their hands, who seemed busy in writing something on each cask. They were not the small casks used by smugglers, but large ones, about one half bigger than common tar-barrels, and all of a size, save two very huge ones at the further end. The cavern was all neat and clean, but there was an appearance of mouldiness about the casks,

as if they had stood there for ages. The men were both at the farther end when Will looked in, and busily engaged; but at length one of them came towards him, holding his torch above his head, and, as Will thought, having his eyes fixed on him. Will never got such a fright in his life;—many a fright he had got with unearthly creatures, but this was the worst of all. The figure that approached him from the cavern was of gigantic size, with grizzly features, and a beard hanging down to his belt. Will did not stop to consider what was best to be done, but, quite forgetting that he was on the face of a hill, almost perpendicular, turned round, and ran with all his might. It was not long till he missed his feet, fell, and hurling down with great celerity, soon reached the bottom of the steep, and getting on his feet, pursued his way home in the utmost haste, terror, and amazement; but the light from the cavern was extinguished on the instant—he saw it no more.

Will apprised all the people within his reach, the next morning, of the wonderful discovery he had made; but the story was so like a fantasy or a dream, that most of them were hard of belief; and some never did believe it, but ascribed all to the Moffat brandy. However, they sallied out in a body, armed with cudgels and two or three rusty rapiers, to reconnoitre; but the entrance into the cave they could not find, nor

has it ever been discovered to this day. They observed very plainly the rut in the grass which Will had made in his rapid descent from the cave, and there were also found evident marks of two horses having been fastened that night in a wild cleuch-head, at a short distance from the spot they were searching. But these were the only discoveries to which the investigation led. If the whole of this was an optical delusion, it was the most singular I ever heard or read of. For my part, I do not believe it was; I believe there was such a cavern existing at that day, and that vestiges of it may still be discovered. It was an unfeasible story altogether for a man to invent; and, moreover, though Will was a man whose character had a deep tinge of the superstitions of his own country, he was besides a man of probity, truth, and honour, and never told that for the truth, which he did not believe to be so.

Daft Jock Amos.

DAFT JOCK AMOS was another odd character, of whom many droll sayings are handed down. He was a lunatic; but having been a scholar in his youth, he was possessed of a sort of wicked wit, and wavering uncertain intelligence, that proved right troublesome to those who took it on them to reprove his eccentricities. As he lived close by the church, in the

time of the far-famed Boston, the minister and he were constantly coming in contact, and many of their little dialogues are preserved.

"The mair fool are ye, quo' Jock Amos to the minister," is a constant by-word in Ettrick to this day. It had its origin simply as follows :—Mr Boston was taking his walk one fine summer evening after sermon, and in his way came upon Jock, very busy cutting some grotesque figures in wood with his knife. Jock, looking hastily up, found he was fairly caught, and not knowing what to say, burst into a foolish laugh—"Ha! ha! ha! Mr Boston, are you there? Will you coo a good whittle wi' me?"

"Nay, nay, John, I will not exchange knives to-day."

"The mair fool are ye," quo' Jock Amos to the minister.

"But, John, can you repeat the fourth commandment?—I hope you can.—Which is the fourth commandment?"

"I daresay, Mr Boston, it'll be the same after the third."

"Can you not repeat it?"

"I am no sure about it—I ken it has some wheecram by the rest."

Mr Boston repeated it, and tried to show him his

error in working with knives on the Sabbath day, John wrought away till the divine added,

"But why won't you rather come to church, John?—what is the reason you never come to church?"

"Because you never preach on the text I want you to preach on."

"What text would you have me to preach on?"

"On the nine-and-twenty knives that came back from Babylon."

"I never heard of them before."

"It is a sign you have never read your Bible. Ha, ha, ha, Mr. Boston! sic fool sic minister."

Mr Boston searched long for John's text that evening, and at last finding it recorded in Ezra, i, 9, he wondered greatly at the acuteness of the fool, considering the subject on which he had been reproving him.

"John, how auld will you be?" said a sage wife to him one day, when talking of their ages.

"O, I dinna ken," said John. "It wad tak a wiser head than mine to tell you that."

"It is unco queer that you dinna ken how auld you are," returned she.

"I ken weel enough how auld I am," said John; "but I dinna ken how auld I'll be."

An old man, named Adam Linton, once met him running from home in the grey of the morning. "Hey,

Jock Amos," said he, "where are you bound for so briskly this morning?"

"Aha! He's wise that wats that, and as daft wha speers," says Jock, without taking his eye from some object that it seemed to be following.

"Are you running after any body?" said Linton.

"I am that, man," returned Jock; "I'm rinnin' after the deil's messenger. Did you see ought o' him gaun by?"

"What was he like?" said Linton.

"Like a great big black corbie," said Jock, "carrying a bit tow in his gab. And what do you think?—he has tauld me a piece o' news the day! There's to be a wedding ower by here the day, man—ay, a wedding! I maun after him, for he has gien me an invitation."

"A wedding? Dear Jock, you are raving. What wedding can there be to-day?" said Linton.

"It is Eppy Telfer's, man—auld Eppy Telfer's to be wed the day; and I'm to be there; and the minister is to be there, and a' the elders. But Tammie, the Cameronian, he darena come, for fear he should hae to dance wi' the kimmers. There will be braw wark there the day, Aedie Linton,—braw wark there the day!" And away ran Jock towards Ettrickhouse, hallooing and waving his cap for joy. Old Adam came in, and said to his wife, who was still in bed, that he

supposed the moon was at the full, for Jock Amos was "gane quite gyte awthegither, and was away shouting to Ettrickhouse to Eppy Telfer's wedding."

"Then," said his wife, "if he be ill, she will be waur, for they are always affected at the same time; and, though Eppy is better than Jock in her ordinary way, she is waur when the moon-madness comes ower her;" (This woman, Eppy Telfer, was likewise subject to lunatic fits of insanity, and Jock had a great ill will at her; he could not even endure the sight of her.)

The above little dialogue was hardly ended before word came that Eppy Telfer had "put-down" herself over night, and was found hanging dead in her own little cottage at day-break. Mr Boston was sent for, who, with his servant man and one of his elders, attended, but in a state of such perplexity and grief, that he seemed almost as much dead as alive. The body was tied on a deal, carried to the peak of the Wedder Law, and interred there, and all the while Jock Amos attended, and never in his life met with an entertainment that appeared to please him more. While the men were making the grave, he sat on a stone near by, jabbering and speaking one while, always addressing Eppy, and laughing most heartily at another.

After this high fit Jock lost his spirits entirely, and never more recovered them. He became a complete

recently, and lay mostly in his bed till the day of his death.

Willie Candlem.

ANOTHER notable man of that day was William Stoddart, nicknamed Candlem, one of the farmers of Ettrickhouse. He was simple, unlettered, and rude, as all his sayings that are preserved testify. Being about to be married to one Meggie Coltard, a great penny-wedding was announced, and the numbers that came to attend it were immense. Candlem and his bride went to Ettrick church to be married, and Mr Boston, who was minister there, perceiving such a motley crowd following them, repaired into the church; and after admitting a few respectable witnesses, he set his son John, and his servant John Currie, to keep the two doors, and restrain the crowd from entering. Young Boston let in a number at his door, but John Currie stood manfully in the breach, refusing entrance to all. When the minister came to put the question, "Are you willing to take this woman," &c.

"I wat weel I was thinking sae," says Candlem.—
"Haud to the door, John Currie!"

When the question was put to Meggie, she bowed assent like a dumb woman, but this did not satisfy Willie Candlem.—"What for d'ye no answer, Meg-

gie?" says he. "Dinna ye hear what the honest man's speering at ye?"

In due time Willie Candlem and Meggie had a son, and as the custom then was, it was decreed that the first Sabbath after he was born he should be baptized. It was about the Martinmas time, the day was stormy, and the water flooded; however, it was agreed that the baptism could not be put off, for fear of the fairies; so the babe was well rolled up in swaddling clothes, and laid on before his father on the white mare, — the stoutest of the kimmers stemming the water on foot. Willie Candlem rode the water slowly and cautiously. When about the middle of the stream, he heard a most unearthly yelling and screaming rise behind him; "What are they squeeling at?" said he to himself, but durst not look back for fear of his charge. After he had crossed the river safely, and a sand-bed about as wide, Willie wheeled his white mare's head about, and exclaimed—"Why, the ne'er a haet I hae but the slough!" Willie had dropped the child into the flooded river, without missing it out of the huge bundle of clothes; but luckily, one of the kimmers picked him up, and as he showed some signs of life, they hurried into a house at Goosegreen, and got him brought round again. In the afternoon he was so far recovered, that the kimmers thought he might be taken up to church for baptism, but Willie Candlem made this sage remark

—“ I doubt he's rather unfiirch to stand it ;—he has gotten enough o' the water for ae day.” On going home to his poor wife, his first address to her was—
“ Ay, ye may take up your handywark, Meggie, in making a slough open at baith ends. What signifies a thing that's open at baith ends ?”

Another time, in harvest, it came a rainy day, and the Estrick began to look very big in the evening. Willie Candlem, perceiving his crop in danger, yoked the white mare in the sledge, and was proceeding to lead his corn out of watermark ; but out came Meggie, and began expostulating with him on the sinfulness of the act,—“ Put in your beast again, like a good Christian man, Willie,” said she, “ and dinna be setting an ill example to a' the parish. Ye ken, that this vera day the minister bade us lippen to Providence in our straits, and we wad never rue't. He'll take it very ill off your hand, the setting of sic an example on the Lord's day ; therefore, Willie, my man, take his advice and mine, and lippen to Providence this time.”

Willie Candlem was obliged to comply, for who can withstand the artillery of a woman's tongue ? So he put up his white mare, and went to bed with a heavy heart ; and the next morning, by break of day, when he arose and looked out, behold the greater part of his crop was gone.—“ Ye may take up your Providence now, Meggie ! Where's your Providence now ? A' down

the water wi' my corn! Ah! I wad trust mair to my gude white mare than to you and Providence baith!"

Meggie answered him meekly, as her duty and custom was—"O Willie! dinna rail at Providence, but down to the meadow-head and claim first." Willie Candlem took the hint, galloped on his white mare down to the Ettrick meadows, over which the river spread, and they were covered with floating sheaves; so Willie began and hauled out, and carried out, till he had at least six times as much corn as he had lost. At length one man came, and another, but Willie refused all partition of the spoil. "Ay, ye may take up your corn now where ye can find it, lads," said Willie; "I keppit nane but my ain. Yours is gane farther down. Had ye come when I came, ye might have keppit it a'." So Willie drove and drove, till the stackyard was full. "I think the crop has turn'd no that ill out after a'," said Meggie. "You've been nae the wear o' trusting to Providence."

"Na," rejoined Willie, "nae o' taking your advice, Meggie, and ganging down to kep and claim at the meadow-head."

CHAPTER VIII.

NANCY CHISHOLM.

JOHN CHISHOLM, farmer of Moorlaggan, was, in the early part of his life, a wealthy and highly respectable man, and associated with the best gentlemen of the country; and in those days he was accounted to be not only reasonable, but mild and benevolent in his disposition. A continued train of unfortunate speculations, however, at last reduced his circumstances so much, that, though at the time when this tale commences, he still continued solvent, it was well enough known to all the country that he was on the brink of ruin; and, by an unfortunate fatality, too inherent in human nature, still as he descended in circumstances, he advanced in pride and violence of temper, until his conduct grew so intolerable, as scarcely to be submitted to even by his own family.

Mr Chisholm had five daughters, well brought up, and well educated; but the second, whose name was Nancy Chisholm, was acknowledged to be the most

beautiful and accomplished of them all. She was so buoyant of spirits, that she hardly appeared to know whether she was treading on the face of the earth, or bounding on the breeze; and before Nancy was eighteen, as was quite natural, she was beloved by the handsomest lad in the parish, whose proper Christian name was Archibald Gillies, but who, by some patronymic or designation of whose import I am ignorant, was always called Gillespick.

Young Gillies was quite below Nancy in rank, although in circumstances they were by this time much the same. His father being only a small sub-tenant of Mr Chisholm's, the latter would have thought his child degraded, had she been discovered even speaking to the young man. He had, moreover, been bred to the profession of a tailor, which, though an honest occupation, and perhaps more lucrative than many others, is viewed, in the country places of Scotland, with a degree of contempt far exceeding that with which it is regarded in more polished communities. Notwithstanding of all this, Gillespick Gillies, the tailor, had the preference of all others in the heart of pretty Nancy; and, as he durst not pay his addresses to her openly, or appear at Moorlaggan by day, they were driven to an expedient quite in mode with the class to which Gillies belonged, but as entirely inconsistent with that propriety of conduct which ought to be observed by

young ladies like those of Moorlaggan—they met by night ; that is, about night-fall in summer, and at the same hour in winter, which made it very late in the night.

Now it unluckily had so happened, that Gillies, the young dashing tailor, newly arrived from Aberdeen, had, at a great wedding the previous winter, paid all his attentions to Siobla, Nancy's eldest sister. This happened, indeed, by mere accident, owing to Nancy's many engagements ; but Siobla did not know that ; and Gillies, being the best dancer in the barn, led her to the head every time, and behaved so courteously, that he made a greater impression on her heart than she was willing to acknowledge. As all ranks mingle at a country wedding, the thing was noted and talked of, both among the low and high ; but neither the high nor the low thought or said that young Gillies had made a very prudent choice. She was not, however, the tailor's choice ; for his whole heart was fixed on her sister Nancy.

The two slept in one chamber, and it was impossible for the younger to escape to her lover without confiding the secret to Siobla, which, therefore, she was obliged to do ; and from that moment jealousy—for jealousy it was, though Miss Siobla called it by another name—began to rankle in her elder sister's bosom. She called Gillies every degrading name she could

invent,—a profligate, a libertine,—and to sum up all, she called him *a tailor*, thereby finishing the sum of degeneracy, and crowning the climax of her reproaches.

Nancy was, nevertheless, exceedingly happy with her handsome lover, who all but adored her. She enjoyed his company perhaps the more on two accounts, one of which she might probably deduce from the words of the wise man, that “stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant ;” but another most certainly was, that Gillies having opened her eyes to the true state of her father’s affairs, and by this led her to perceive that she was only “a penniless lass wi’ a lang pedigree,” she could not help drawing the conclusion, that the tailor was as good as she, and that the course she was taking, besides being very agreeable to her own wishes, was the most prudent that could be conceived.

This information preying on Nancy’s mind, she could not help communicating it in confidence to one of her sisters, (Siobla, it is to be supposed,) who, believing the report to be a malicious falsehood, went straight to her father with the news, as soon as he arrived from the market. Some vexatious occurrences connected with his depressed fortunes, had put him sorely out of humour that night, and he had likewise been drinking a good deal, which made matters worse ;

so that when Sieble informed him of the country rumour, that he was about to become a bankrupt, his fury rose to an ungovernable pitch, and, seizing her by the arm, he adjured her forthwith to name her informer, against whom he at the same time vowed the most consummate vengeance. His daughter was frightened, and without hesitation told him that she had learnt the report from her sister Nancy. Nancy was a favourite with old Chisholm, but that circumstance seemed only to inflame him the more; that one so much cherished and beloved should make herself instrumental in breaking his credit, was, he thought, a degree of ingratitude that justified his severest resentment, and with a countenance of the utmost fury, he turned on her, and demanded if what he had heard was true. With a face as pale as death, and trembling lips, she acknowledged that it was. But when desired to name her informer, she remained silent, trembled, and wept. On being further urged, and threatened, she said, hesitatingly, that she did not invent the story, and supposed she had heard it among the servants.

"This will not do, miss," exclaimed her father; "tell me at once the name of your informer; and depend upon it, that person, whoever it is, had better never been born."

Nancy could not answer, but sobbed and wept. Just at that unlucky moment, a whistle was heard.

from the wood opposite the window. This was noticed by Mr Chisholm, who looked a little startled, and enquired what or who it was; but no one gave him any answer.

It had been settled between the two lovers, that when Gillies came to see Nancy, he was to whistle from a certain spot in a certain manner, while she was to open the window, and hold the light close to the glass for an instant, that being the token that she heard and understood the signal. In the present dilemma, the performance of her part of the agreement was impracticable; and, of course, when old Chisholm was once more rising into a paroxysm of rage at his daughter, the ominous whistle was repeated.

"What is this?" demanded he, in a peremptory tone. "Tell me instantly; for I see by your looks you know and understand what it is. Siobla, do you know?"

"Yes, I do," replied Siobla. "I know well enough what it is—I do not hear it so seldom."

"Well, then, inform me at once what it means," said her father.

"It is, Nancy's sweetheart come to whistle her out—your young sailor Gillies;" answered Siobla, without any endeavour to avert her father's wrath, by giving the information in an indirect way.

"Oho! Is it thus?" exclaimed the infuriated fa-

ther. "And Nancy always answers and attends to this audacious tailor's whistle, does she?"

"Indeed she does, sir; generally once or twice every week," replied the young woman, in the same willing tone.

"The secret is then out!" said old Chisholm, in words that quavered with anger. "It is plain from whence the injurious report has been attained! Too fond father! alas, poor old man! Have matters already come thus low with thee? And hast thou indeed nourished and cherished this favourite child, giving her an education fitting her for the highest rank in society, and all that she might throw herself away upon a—a—a tailor!—Begone, girls! I must converse with this degraded creature alone."

When her sisters had left the apartment, Nancy knelt, wept, prayed, and begged forgiveness; but a temporary distraction had banished her father's reason, and he took hold of her long fair hair, wound it round his left hand in the most methodical manner, and began to beat her with his cane. She uttered a scream; on which he stopped, and told her that if she uttered another sound before he had done chastising her, it should be her last; but this causing her to scream only ten times louder he beat her with such violence that he shivered the cane to pieces. He then desisted, calling her the ruin of her sisters, of himself, and all her

father's house; opened the door, and was about to depart and leave her, when the tailor's whistle again sounded in his ears, louder and nearer than before. This once more drove him to madness, and seizing a heavy dog-whip that hung in the lobby, he returned into the parlour, and struck his daughter repeatedly in the most unmerciful manner. During the concluding part of this horrid scene, she opened not her mouth, but eyed her ferocious parent with composure, thinking she had nothing but death to expect from his hands.

Alas! death was nothing to the pangs she then suffered, and those she was doomed to suffer! Her father at last ceased from his brutal treatment, led her from the house, threw her from him, with a curse, and closed the door with a force that made the casements of the house clatter.

There never was perhaps a human being whose circumstances in life were as suddenly changed, or more deplorable than Nancy Chisholm's were that night. But it was not only her circumstances in life that were changed: she felt at once that the very nature within her was changed also, and that from being a thing of happiness and joy, approaching to the nature of a seraph, she was now converted into a fiend. She had a cup measured to her which nature could not endure, and its baneful influences had the instant effect of making her

abhor her own nature, and become a rebel to all its milder qualities.

The first resolution she formed was that of full and ample revenge. She determined to make such a dreadful retaliation, as should be an example to all jealous sisters and unnatural parents, while the world lasted. Her plan was to wait till after midnight, and then set fire to the premises, and burn her father, her sister, and all that pertained to them, to ashes. In little more than an instant was her generous nature so far altered, that she exulted in the prospect of this horrid catastrophe.

With such a purpose, the poor wretch went and hid herself until all was quiet; and there is no doubt that she would have put her scheme in execution, had it not been for the want of fire to kindle the house; for as to going into any dwelling, or seeing the face of an acquaintance, in her present degraded condition, her heart shrunk from it. So, after spending some hours in abortive attempts at raising fire, she was obliged to depart, bidding an eternal adieu to all that she had hitherto held dear on earth.

On the approach of daylight, she retired into a thicket, and, at a brook, washed and bathed her bloated arms and face, disentangled and combed her yellow hair with her fingers, and when she thought she was unobserved, drew the train of her gown over her head,

and sped away on her journey, whither she knew not.

No distinct account of her escape, or of what became of her for some time, can be given; but the whole bent of her inclinations was to do evil; she felt herself impelled to it by a motive she could not account for, but which she had no power or desire to resist. She felt it as it were incumbent on her always to retaliate evil for good,—the most fiendish disposition that the human heart could feel. She had a desire that the Evil One would appear in person, that she might enter into a formal contract to do evil. She had a longing to impart to others some share of the torment she had herself endured, and missed no opportunity of inflicting such. Once in the course of her wanderings, she met, in a sequestered place, a little girl, whom she seized, and beat her “within an inch of her life,” as she called it. She was at this period quite a vagabond, and a pest wherever she went.

The manner in which she first got into a place was not the least remarkable of her adventures. On first coming to Aberdeen, she went into the house of one Mr Simon Gordon, in the upper Kirkgate, and asked some food, which was readily granted her by the housekeeper; for, owing to her great beauty and superior address, few ever refused her any thing she asked. She seemed little disposed to leave the house again, and by no means could the housekeeper prevail

upon her to depart, unless she were admitted to speak with Mr Gordon.

This person was an old bachelor, rich and miserly; and the housekeeper was terrified at the very idea of acknowledging to him that she had disposed of the least morsel of food in charity; far less dared she allow a mendicant to carry her petition into her master's very presence. But the pertinacity of the individual she had now to deal with fairly overcame her fears, and she carried up to Mr Simon Gordon the appalling message, that a "seeking woman," that is, a begging woman, demanded to speak with him. Whether it was that Mr Simon's abhorrence of persons of that cast was driven from the field by the audacity of the announcement, I cannot pretend to say; but it is certain that he remitted in his study of the state of the public funds, and granted the interview. And as wonders when they once commence, are, for the most part, observed to continue to follow each other for a time, he not only astounded the housekeeper by his ready assent to let the stranger have speech of him: but the poor woman had nearly sunk into the ground with dismay when she heard him, after the interview was over, give orders that this same wanderer was to be retained in the house in the capacity of her assistant. Here, however, the miraculous part of this adventure stops; for the housekeeper, who had previously been

a rich old miser's only servant, did, in the first place, remonstrate loudly against any person being admitted to share her labours, or her power ; and on finding all that could be said totally without effect, she refused to remain with her master any longer, and immediately departed, leaving Nancy Chisholm in full possession of the premises.

Being now in some degree tired of a wandering unsettled life, she continued with Mr Gordon, testifying her hatred of the world rather by a sullen and haughty apathy, than by any active demonstrations of enmity ; and what was somewhat remarkable, by her attention to the wants of the peevish and feeble old man, her master, she gained greatly upon his good-will.

In this situation her father discovered her, after an absence of three years, during which time his compunctious visitings had never either ceased or diminished from the time he had expelled her his house, while under the sway of unbridled passion. He never had more heart for any thing in the world. All his affairs went to wreck ; he became bankrupt, and was driven from his ample possessions, and was forced to live in a wretched cottage in a sort of genteel penury. But all his misfortunes and disappointments put together did not affect him half so much as the loss of his darling daughter ; he never doubted that she had gone to the home of her lover, to the house of old

Gillies; and this belief was one that carried great bitterness to his heart. When he discovered that she had never been seen there, his next terror was that she had committed suicide; and he trembled night and day, anticipating all the horrid shapes in which he might hear that the desperate act had been accomplished. When the dread of this began to wear away, a still more frightful idea arose to haunt his troubled imagination—it was that of his once beloved child driven to lead a life of infamy and disgrace. This conclusion was but too natural, and he brooded on it with many repentant tears for the space of nearly two years, when he at last set out with a resolution either to find his lost daughter, or spend the remainder of his life in search of her.

It is painful to think of the scenes that he went through in this harassing and heart-rending search, until he at length discovered her in the house of Mr. Simon Gordon. For a whole week he had not the courage to visit her, though he stole looks of her every day; but he employed himself in making every inquiry concerning her present situation.

One day she was sitting in gay attire, sewing and singing the following rhyme, in crooning of which she spent a part of every day:

He former lover I have lost to peace, I am lost to grace,
I am long-travelled, but I am not far from home;

I have lost my way in the light of day,
And the gates of heaven I will never won.

If one sigh would part from my burning heart,
Or one tear would rise in my thirsty eye,
Through wo and pain it might come again—
The soul that fled, from deep injury.

In one hour of grief I would find relief,
One pang of sorrow would ease my pain ;
But joy or wo, in this world below,
I can never never know again !

While she was thus engaged, old Chisholm, with an agitated heart and trembling frame, knocked gently at the door, which was slowly and carelessly opened by his daughter ; for she performed every thing as if she had no interest in it. The two gazed on one another for a moment, without speaking ; but the eyes of the father were beaming with love and tenderness, while those of the daughter had that glazed and joyless gleam which too well bespoke her hardened spirit. The old man spread out his arms to embrace her ; but she closed the door upon him. He retired again to his poor lodgings, from whence he sent her a letter fraught with tenderness and sorrow, which produced no answer.

There was another besides her father who had found her out before this time, though he had never ventured to make himself known to her ; and that was her former lover, Gillespick Gillies, the tailor. He had traced her in all her wanderings, and though it

had been once his intention to settle in Edinburgh, yet for her sake, he hired himself to a great clothier and tailor in the city of Aberdeen. After her father's ineffectual application to her, young Gillies ventured to make his appearance ; but his reception was far from what he hoped. She was embarrassed and cold, attaching blame to him for every thing, particularly for persuading her out to the woods by night, which had been the means of drawing down her father's anger upon her. He proffered all the reparation in his power ; but she would not hear him speak, and even forbade him ever to attempt seeing her again.

The tailor's love was, however, too deeply rooted to be so easily overcome. He would not be said nay, but waited upon her evening and morning ; still she remained callous and unmoved, notwithstanding of all his kind attentions.

The frame of her spirit at this period must have been an anomaly in human nature ; she knew no happiness, and shunned, with the utmost pertinacity, every avenue leading towards its heavenly shrine. She often said afterwards, that she believed her father's rod had beat an angel out of her, and a demon into its place.

But Gillespick, besides being an affectionate and faithful lover, was a singularly acute youth. He told this perverse beauty again and again that she was acknowledged the flower of all Aberdeen, saving a Miss

Marshall, who sat in the College Church every Sunday, to whom some gentlemen gave the preference; and then he always added, "But I am quite certain that were you to appear there dressed in your best style, every one would at once see how much you out-shine her." He went over this so often, that Nancy's vanity became interested, and she proffered, of her own accord, to accompany him one day to the College Kirk.

From the time that Gillies got her to enter the church-door again, although she went from no good motive, he considered the victory won, and counted on the certainty of reclaiming his beloved from despair and destruction. All eyes were soon turned on her beauty, but hers sought out and rested on Mary Marshall alone. She was convinced of her own superiority, which added to the elegance of her carriage and gaiety of her looks; so that she went home exceedingly well pleased with—*the minister's sermon!*

She went back in the afternoon, the next day, and every day thereafter; and her lover noted that she sometimes appeared to fix her attention on the minister's discourse. But one day in particular, when he was preaching on that divine precept, contained in St Luke's Gospel, "Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you," she seemed all the while enrapt by the most ardent feelings, and never

for one moment took her eye from the speaker. Her lover perceived this, and kept his eyes steadfastly fixed on her face. At last the reverend divine, in his application of this doctrine to various characters, painted her own case in such a light that it appeared drawn from nature. He then expatiated on the sweet and heavenly joys of forgiveness with such ardour and devotion, that tears once more began to beam in those bright eyes, whose fountains seemed long to have been dried up; and ere the preacher concluded, she was forced to hide her face, and give free vent to her feelings, weeping abundantly.

Her lover conducted her home, and observed a total alteration in her manner towards him. This change on her seared and hardened spirit, was more, however, than her frame could brook. The next day she was ill, and she grew worse and worse daily; a strange disease was hers, for she was seized with stubborn and fierce paroxysms, very much resembling those possessed of devils in the dawning of Christianity. It appeared exactly as if a good spirit and an evil one were contending for the possession of her person, as their tabernacle, none of the medical faculty being able to account for these extraordinary changes in a natural way. Her lover hired a sick-nurse, who attended both on her and the old man, which pleased the latter well,

and he thought there was not such a man in the city of Aberdeen as the young tailor. . . .
Nancy's disease was at length mastered, but it left her feeble and emaciated, and from that time forth, she showed herself indeed an altered woman. The worthy divine who first opened her eyes to her lost condition, had visited her frequently in her sickness, and repeated his exhortations. Her lover waited on her every day; and not only this, but being, as I before observed, an acute youth, he carried to the house with him cordials for the old miser, and told or read him the news from the Stock Exchange. Nancy was now attached to Gillespick with the most ardent and pure affection, and more deeply than in her early days of frolic and thoughtlessness; for now her love toward him was mellowed by a ray from heaven. In few words, they were married. Old Simon Gordon died shortly after, and left them more than half his fortune, amounting, it was said, to £11,000; a piece of generosity to which he was moved, not only by the attention shown him in his latter days by the young pair, but, as he expressed it in his will, "being convinced that Gillies would take care of the money." This legacy was a great fortune for an Aberdeen tailor and clothier. He bought the half of his master's stock and business, and in consequence of some anxiety and

navy contracts, realized a very large fortune in a short time.

Old Chisholm was by this time reduced to absolute beggary ; he lived among his former wealthy acquaintances, sometimes in the hall, sometimes in the parlour, as their good or bad humour prevailed. His daughters, likewise, were all forced to accept situations as upper servants, and were, of course, very unhappily placed, countenanced by no class, being too proud to associate with those in the station to which they had fallen. The company of lowlanders that had taken Moorlaggan on Chisholm's failure, followed his example, and failed also. The farm was again in the market, and nobody to bid any thing for it ; at length an agent from Edinburgh took it for a rich lady, at half the rent that had been paid for it before ; and then every one said, had old John Chisholm held it at such a rent, he would have been the head of the country to that day. The whole of the stock and furniture were bought up from the creditors, paid in ready money, and the discount returned ; and as this was all done by the Edinburgh agent, no one knew who was to be the farmer, although the shepherds and servants were hired, and the business of the farm went on as before.

Old Chisholm was at this time living in the house of a Mr Mitchell, on Spey, not far from Pitmain,

when he received a letter from this same Edinburgh agent, stating, that the new farmer of Moorlaggan wanted to speak with him on very important business relating to that farm; and that all his expenses would be paid to that place, and back again, or to what other place in the country he chose to go. Chisholm showed Mr Mitchell the letter, who said, he understood it was to settle the marches about some disputed land, and it would be as well for him to go and make a good charge for his trouble, and at the same time offered to accommodate him with a pony. Mr Mitchell could not spare his own saddle-horse, having to go a journey; so he mounted Mr Chisholm on a small shaggy highland nag, with crop ears, and equipped with an old saddle, and a bridle with hair reins. It was the evening of the third day after he left Mr Mitchell's house before he reached Moorlaggan; and as he went up Coolen-aird, he could not help reflecting with bitterness of spirit on the alteration of times with him. It was not many years ago when he was wont to ride by the same path, mounted on a fine horse of his own, with a livery servant behind him; now he rode a little shabby nag, with crop ears and a hair bridle, and even that diminutive creature belonged to another man. Formerly he had a comfortable home, and a respectable family to welcome him; now he had no home, and that family was all scattered abroad. "Alas!" said

harts himself, "times are indeed easily altered with men's eyes, and I may affect to blame misfortune for all that has befallen me; but I cannot help being persuaded that the man who is driven by unmanly passions to do that of which he is ashamed both before God and man, can never prosper. Oh, my child! my lost and darling child! What I have suffered for her both in body, mind, and outward estate!"

In this downcast and querulous mood did the forlorn ebbman reach his former habitation. All was neat and elegant about the place, and there was a chaise standing at the end of the house. When old Chisholm saw this, he did not venture up to the front door, but alighted, and led his crop-eared pony to the back door, at which he knocked, and having stated the errand upon which he came, was, after some delay, ushered into the presence of a courtly dame, who accosted him in proud and dignified language as follows:—

"Your name is Mr. John Chisholm, I believe?"

"It is, madam; at your service."

"And you were once farmer here, I believe?" (A bow.) "Ay. Hem. And how did you lose your farm?"

"Through misfortunes, madam; and by giving too much credit to insufficient parties."

"Ay—so! That was not prudent in you to give so much credit in such quarters—Eh?"

"I have been favoured with a letter from your agent, madam," said Chisholm, to whom this supercilious tone of cross-questioning was far from being agreeable; "and I beg to know what are your commands with me?"

"Ay! True. Very right. So you don't like to talk of your own affairs, don't you? No; it seems now—Why, the truth is, that my agent wished me to employ you as factor or manager of these lands, as my husband and I must live for the greater part of the year at a great distance. We are willing to give a good salary; and I believe there is no man so fit for our purpose. But I have heard accounts of you that I do not like,—that you were an inexorable tyrant in your own family, abusing and maltreating the most amiable of them in a very unmanly manner. And, I have heard, but I hope not truly, that you drove one daughter to disgrace and destruction."

Here Chisholm turned his face towards the window, burst into tears, and said, he hoped she had not sent for a miserable and degraded old man to torture his feelings by probing these wounds of the soul that were incurable.

"Nay, I beg your pardon, old gentleman. I sent for you to do you a service. I was only mentioning a vile report that reached my ear, in hopes you could exculpate yourself."

"Alas, madam, I cannot."

"Dreadful ! Dreadful ! Father of heaven, could thy hand frame a being with feelings like this ! But I hope you did not, as is reported,—No—you could not—you did not strike her, did you ?"

"Alas ! alas !" exclaimed the agonized old man.

"What ? Beat her—scourge her—throw her from your house at midnight with a father's curse upon her head ?"

"I did ! I did ! I did !"

"Monster ! Monster ! Go, and hide your devoted and execrable head in some cavern in the bowels of the earth, and wear out the remainder of your life in praying to thy God for repentance ; for thou art not fit to herd with the rest of his creatures !"

"My cup of sorrow and misery is now full," said the old man as he turned, staggering, towards the door.

"On the very spot has this judgment fallen on me."

"But stop, sir—stop for a little space," said the lady.

"Perhaps I have been too hasty, and it may be you have repented of that unnatural crime already ?"

"Repented ! Ay, God is my witness, not a night or day has passed over this grey head on which I have not repented ; in that bitterness of spirit too, which the chief of sinners only can feel."

"Have you indeed repented of your treatment of your daughter ? Then all is forgiven on her part. And do you, father, forgive me too !"

The old man looked down with bewildered vision, and, behold, there was the lady of the mansion kneeling at his feet, and embracing his knees ! She had thrown aside her long flowing veil, and he at once discovered the comely face of his beloved daughter.

That very night she put into her father's hand the new lease of all his former possessions, and receipts for the stock, crop, and furniture. The rest of the family were summoned together, and on the following Sabbath they went all to church and took possession of their old family seat, every one sitting in the place she occupied formerly, with Siobla at the head. But the generous creature who had thus repaid good for evil, was the object of attraction for every eye, and the admiration of every heart.

This is a true story, and it contains not one moral, but many, as every true portraiture of human life must do : It shows us the danger of youthful imprudence, of jealousy, and of unruly passions ; but, above all, it shows, that without a due sense of religion there can be no true and disinterested love.

CHAPTER IX.

SNOW-STORMS.

Snow-storms constitute the various eras of the pastoral life. They are the red lines in the shepherd's memory—the remembrancers of years and ages that are past—the tablets of memory by which the ages of his children, the times of his ancestors, and the rise and downfall of families, are invariably ascertained. Even the progress of improvement in Scotch farming can be traced traditionally from these; and the rent of a farm or estate given with precision; before and after such and such a storm, though the narrator be uncertain in what century the said notable storm happened. “Mar’s Year,” and “that year the Hielanders raid,” are but secondary mementos to the Year Nine and the Year Forty—these stand in bloody capitals in the annals of the pastoral life, as well as many more that shall hereafter be mentioned.

The most dismal of all those on record is the Thirteen Drifty Days. This extraordinary storm, as near

as I have been able to trace, must have occurred in the year 1660. The traditionary stories and pictures of desolation that remain of it, are the most dire imaginable; and the mentioning of the Thirteen Drifty Days to an old shepherd, in a stormy winter night, never fails to impress his mind with a sort of religious awe, and often sets him on his knees before that Being who alone can avert such another calamity.

It is said that for thirteen days and nights the snow-drift never once abated—the ground was covered with frozen snow when it commenced, and during all the time of its continuance the sheep never broke their fast. The cold was intense to a degree never before remembered; and about the fifth and sixth days of the storm, the young sheep began to fall into a sleepy and torpid state, and all that were so affected in the evening died over-night. The intensity of the frost-wind often cut them off when in that state quite instantaneously. About the ninth and tenth days, the shepherds began to build up huge semicircular walls of their dead, in order to afford some shelter for the living remainder; but such shelter availed little, for about the same time the want of food began to be felt so severely that they were frequently seen tearing one another's wool with their teeth.

When the storm abated, on the fourteenth day from its commencement, there was on many a high-lying

farm not a living sheep to be seen. Large misshapen walls of dead, surrounding a small prostrate flock likewise all dead, and frozen stiff in their lairs, were all that remained to the forlorn shepherd and his master; and though on low-lying farms, where the snow was not so hard before the tempest began, numbers of sheep weathered the storm, yet their constitutions received such a shock, that the greater part of them perished afterwards; and the final consequence was, that about nine-tenths of all the sheep in the South of Scotland were destroyed.

In the extensive pastoral district of Eskdale-muir, which maintains upwards of 20,000 sheep, it is said none were left alive, but forty young wedders on one farm, and five old ewes on another. The farm of Phaap remained without a stock and without a tenant for twenty years after the storm; and when at length one very honest and liberal-minded man ventured to take a lease of it, it was at the annual rent of "a grey coat and a pair of hose!" It is now rented at £500. An extensive glen in Tweedsmuir, now belonging to Sir James Montgomery of Stanhope, became a common at that time, to which any man drove his flocks that pleased, and it continued so for nearly a century. On one of Sir Patrick Scott of Thirlestane's farms, that keeps upwards of 900 sheep, they all died save one black ewe, from which the farmer had high hopes of

preserving a breed ; but some unlucky dogs, that were all laid idle for want of sheep to run at, fell upon this poor solitary remnant of a good stock, and chased her into St Mary's Loch, where she was drowned. When word of this was brought to John Scott the farmer, commonly called Gouffing Jock, he is reported to have expressed himself as follows : " Ochon, ochon ! and is that the gate o't ?—a black beginning miks aye a black end." Then taking down an old rusty sword, he added, " Come thou away, my auld friend ; thou and I maun e'en stock Bowerhope Law ance mair. Bessy, my dow, how gaes the auld sang ?—

There's walth o' kye i' bonny Braidless ;
There's walth o' yowes i' Tyne ;
There's walth o' gear i' Gowanburn—
And they shall a' be thine."

It is a pity that tradition has not preserved any thing farther of the history of Gouffing Jock than this one saying.

The next memorable event of this nature is the Blast o' March, which happened on the 27th day of that month, in the year 1724, on a Monday morning ; and though it lasted only for one forenoon, it was calculated that it destroyed upwards of a thousand scores of sheep, as well as a number of shepherds. There is one anecdote of this storm that is worthy of being preserved, as it shows with how much attention shepherds,

as well as sailors, should observe the appearances of the sky. The previous Sunday evening was so warm that the lasses went home from church barefoot, and the young men threw off their plaids and coats, and carried them over their shoulders. A large group of these youngers, going home from the church of Yarrow, equipped in this manner, chanced to pass by an old shepherd on the farm of Newhouse, named Walter Blake, who had all his sheep gathered to the side of a wood. They asked Wattie, who was a very religious man, what could have induced him to gather his sheep on the Sabbath day? He answered, that he had seen an ill-hued weather-gaw that morning, and was afraid it was going to be a drift. They were so much amused at Wattie's apprehensions, that they clapped their hands, and laughed at him, and one pert girl cried, "Aye, fie tak care, Wattie; I wadna say but it may be thrapple deep or the morn." Another asked, "If he wasna rather feared for the sun burning the een out o' their heads?" and a third, "If he didna keep a correspondence wi' the thieves, and ken they were to ride that night?" Wattie was obliged to bear all this, for the evening was fine beyond any thing generally seen at that season, and only said to them at parting, "Weel, weel, callants, time will try a'; let him laugh that wins; but slacks will be sleek, a hogg for the howking; we'll a' get horns to tout on the morn." The saying grew

proverbial; but Wattie was the only man in that country who saved the whole of his flock. The years 1709, 1740, and 1772, were likewise all years notable for severity, and for the losses sustained among the flocks of sheep. In the latter, the snow lay from the middle of December until the middle of April, and was all that time hard frozen. Partial thaws always kept the farmer's hopes of relief alive, and thus prevented him from removing his sheep to a lower situation, till at length they grew so weak that they could not be removed. There has not been such a general loss in the days of any man living as in that year. It is by these years that the severity of all subsequent hard winters has been estimated, and also, of late, by that of 1795; and when the balance turns out in favour of the calculator, there is always a degree of thankfulness expressed, as well as a composed submission to the awards of Divine providence. The daily feeling naturally impressed on the shepherd's mind, that all his comforts are so entirely in the hand of Him that rules the elements, contributes not a little to that firm spirit of devotion for which the Scottish shepherd is so distinguished. I know of no scene so impressive, as that of a family sequestered in a lone glen during the time of a winter storm;—and where is the glen in the kingdom that wants such a habitation? There they are left to the protection of Heaven; and they know and feel it

Throughout all the wild vicissitudes of nature, they have no hope of assistance from man, but expect to receive it from the Almighty alone. Before retiring to rest, the shepherd uniformly goes out to examine the state of the weather, and make his report to the little dependent group within—nothing is to be seen but the conflict of the elements, nor heard but the raving of the storm—then they all kneel around him, while he recommends them to the protection of Heaven; and though their little hymn of praise can scarcely be heard even by themselves, as it mixes with the roar of the tempest, they never fail to rise from their devotions with their spirits cheered and their confidence renewed, and go to sleep with an exaltation of mind of which kings and conquerors have no share. Often have I been a sharer in such scenes; and never, even in my youngest years, without having my heart deeply impressed by the circumstances. There is a sublimity in the very idea. There we lived, as it were, inmates of the cloud and the storm; but we stood in a relationship to the Ruler of these, that neither time nor eternity could ever cancel. Woe to him that would weaken the bonds with which true Christianity connects us with Heaven and with each other!

But of all the storms that ever Scotland witnessed, or I hope ever will again behold, there is none of them that can once be compared with that of the memorable

night between Friday the 24th and Saturday the 25th of January, 1794. This storm fell with peculiar violence on that division of the South of Scotland that lies between Crawford-muir and the Border. In these bounds seventeen shepherds perished, and upwards of thirty were carried home insensible, who afterwards recovered. The number of sheep that were lost far outwent any possibility of calculation. One farmer alone, Mr Thomas Beattie, lost seventy-two scores—and many others, in the same quarter, from thirty to forty scores each. Whole flocks were overwhelmed with snow, and no one ever knew where they were till the snow was dissolved, and they were all found dead. I myself witnessed one particular instance of this, on the farm of Thickside: there were twelve scores of excellent ewes, all one age, that were missing all the time that the snow lay, which was only a week, and no traces of them could be found; when the snow went away, they were discovered all lying dead, with their heads one way, as if a flock of sheep had dropped dead going from the washing. Many hundreds were driven into waters, burns, and lakes, by the violence of the storm, where they were buried or frozen up, and these the flood carried away, so that they were never seen or found by the owners at all. The following anecdote somewhat illustrates the confusion and devastation bred in the country:—The greater

part of the rivers on which the storm was most deadly, run into the Solway Frith, on which there is a place called the Beds of Esk, where the tide throws out, and leaves whatever is carried into it by the rivers. When the flood after the storm subsided, there were found on that place, and the shores adjacent, one thousand eight hundred and forty sheep, nine black cattle, three horses, two men, one woman, forty-five dogs, and one hundred and eighty hares, besides a number of meaner animals.

The snow lay a week on the ground, the thaw having begun on Friday, the 31st of January. Some registers that I have seen, place the date of this storm on the 24th of December, a month too early; but that day was one of the finest winter days I ever saw.

To relate all the particular scenes of distress that occurred during this tremendous hurricane is impossible—a volume would not contain them. I shall, therefore, in order to give a true picture of the storm, merely relate what I saw, and shall in nothing exaggerate. But before doing this, I must mention a circumstance, curious in its nature, and connected with others that afterwards occurred.

Some time before that, a few young shepherds (of whom I was one, and the youngest, though not the least ambitious, of the number) had formed themselves into a sort of literary society, that met periodi-

cally, at one or other of the houses of its members, where each read an essay on a subject previously given out; and after that, every essay was minutely investigated and criticised. We met in the evening, and continued our important discussions all night. Friday the 24th of January was the day appointed for one of these meetings, and it was to be held at Entertrony, a wild and remote shieling, at the very sources of the Ettrick. I had the honour of being named preses—so, leaving the charge of my flock with my master, off I set from Blackhouse, on Thursday, a very ill day, with a flaming bombastical essay in my pocket, and my tongue trained to many wise and profound remarks, to attend this extraordinary meeting, though the place lay at the distance of twenty miles, over the wildest hills in the kingdom, and the time the depth of winter. I remained that night with my parents at Ettrick-house, and next day again set out on my journey. I had not, however, proceeded far, before I perceived, or thought I perceived, symptoms of an approaching storm, and that of no ordinary nature. I remember the day well: the wind, which was rough on the preceding day, had subsided into a dead calm; there was a slight fall of snow, which descended in small thin flakes, that seemed to hover and reel in the air, as if uncertain whether to go upward or downward—the hills were covered down to the middle with deep folds

of rime, or frost-fog—in the cloughs the fog was dark, dense, and seemed as if it were heaped and oppressed together—but on the brows of the hills it had a pale and fleecy appearance; and, altogether, I never beheld a day of such gloomy aspect. . . . A thought now began to intrude itself on me, though I strove all that I could to get quit of it; that it would be a wise course in me to return home to my sheep. Inclination urged me on, and I tried to bring reason to her aid, by saying to myself, “I have no reason in the world to be afraid of my sheep; my master took the charge of them cheerfully; there is not a better shepherd in the kingdom, and I cannot doubt his concern in having them right.” All would not do; I stood still and contemplated the day, and the more closely I examined it, the more was I impressed that some mischief was brewing; so, with a heavy heart, I turned on my heel, and made the best of my way back the road I came;—my elaborate essay, and all my wise observations, had been provided in vain.

On my way home, I called at a place named the Hopehouse, to see a maternal uncle, whom I loved; he was angry when he saw me, and said it was not like a prudent lad to be running up and down the country, in such weather, and at such a season; and urged me to make haste home, for it would be a drift before next morning. He accompanied me to the top of the height,

called the Black Gate-head, and on parting, he shook his head, and said, "Ah! it is a dangerous-looking day! In troth I'm amaisht fear'd to look at it." I said I would not mind it, if any one knew from what quarter the storm would arise; but we might, in all likelihood, gather our sheep to the place where they would be most exposed to danger. He bade me keep a good look-out all the way home, and whenever I observed the first opening through the rime, to be assured the wind would rise directly from that point: I did as he desired me, but the clouds continued close-set all around, till the fall of evening; and as the snow had been accumulating all day, so as to render walking very unfurthersome, it was that time before I reached home. The first thing I did was to go to my master, and inquire where he had left my sheep. He told me; but though I had always the most perfect confidence in his experience, I was not pleased with what he had done—he had left a part of them far too high out on the hills, and the rest were not where I would have had them; and I told him so: he said he had done all for the best, but if there appeared to be any danger, if I would call him up in the morning, he would assist me. We had two beautiful servant girls, and with them I sat chattering till past eleven o'clock, and then I went down to the Old Tower. What could have taken me to that ruinous habitation of the Black

Douglasses at that untimely hour, I cannot recollect, but it certainly must have been from a supposition that one of the girls would follow me, or else that I would see a hare—both very unlikely events to have taken place on such a night. However, certain it is, that there I was at midnight, and it was while standing on the top of the staircase turret, that I first beheld a bright bore through the clouds, towards the north, which reminded me of my uncle's warning about the point from which the wind would rise. But at this time a smart thaw had commenced, and the breeze seemed to be coming from the south, so that I laughed in my heart at his prediction, and accounted it quite absurd.—Short was the time till awful experience told me how true it was!

I then went to my bed in the byre-loft, where I slept with a neighbour shepherd, named Borthwick; but though fatigued with walking through the snow, I could not close an eye, so that I heard the first burst of the storm, which commenced between one and two, with a fury that no one can conceive who does not remember it. Besides, the place where I lived being exposed to two or three "gathered winds," as they are called by shepherds, the storm raged there with redoubled fury. It began all at once, with such a tremendous roar, that I imagined it was a peal of thunder, until I felt the house trembling to its foundation. In

a few minutes I thrust my naked arm through a hole in the roof, in order, if possible, to ascertain what was going on without, for not a ray of light could I see. I could not then, nor can I yet, express my astonishment : So completely was the air overloaded with falling and driving snow, that, but for the force of the wind, I felt as if I had thrust my arm into a wreath of snow. I deemed it a judgment sent from Heaven upon us, and went to bed again, trembling with agitation. I lay still for about an hour, in hopes that it might prove only a temporary hurricane ; but, hearing no abatement of its fury, I awakened Borthwick, and bade him get up, for it was come on such a night or morning, as never blew from the heavens. He was not long in obeying, for as soon as he had heard the turmoil, he started from his bed, and in one minute throwing on his clothes, he hastened down the ladder, and opening the door, remained for a good while, uttering exclamations of astonishment. The door where he stood was not above fourteen yards from the door of the dwelling-house ; but a wreath was already heaped between them, as high as the walls of the house—and in trying to get round or through this, Borthwick lost himself, and could neither find the house nor his way back to the byre ; and about six minutes after, I heard him calling my name, in a shrill desperate tone of voice, at which I could not refrain from laughing im-

moderately, notwithstanding the dismal prospect that lay before us. I heard from his cries where he was. He had tried to make his way over the top of a large dunghill, but going to the wrong side, had fallen over, and wrestled long among snow, quite over the head. I did not think proper to move to his assistance, but lay still, and shortly after, heard him shouting at the kitchen-door for instant admittance. I kept my bed for about three quarters of an hour longer; and then rose, and on reaching the house with much difficulty, found our master, the ploughman, Borthwick, and the two servant maids, sitting round the kitchen fire, with looks of dismay, I may almost say despair. We all agreed at once, that the sooner we were able to reach the sheep, the better chance we had to save a remnant; and as there were eight hundred excellent ewes, all in one lot, but a long way distant, and the most valuable lot of any on the farm, we resolved to make a bold effort to reach them. Our master made family worship, a duty he never neglected; but that morning, the manner in which he expressed our trust and confidence in Heaven, was particularly affecting. We took our breakfast—filled our pockets with bread and cheese—sewed our plaids around us—tied down our hats with napkins coming below our chins—and each taking a strong staff in his hand, we set out on the attempt.

No sooner was the door closed behind us than we

lost sight of each other ; seeing there was none—it was impossible for a man to see his hand held up before him—and it was still two hours till day. We had no means of keeping together but by following to one another's voices, nor of working our way save by groping before us with our staves. It soon appeared to me a hopeless concern, for, ere ever we got clear of the houses and hay-stacks, we had to roll ourselves over two or three wreaths which it was impossible to wade through ; and all the while the wind and drift were so violent, that every three or four minutes we were obliged to hold our faces down between our knees to recover our breath.

We soon got into an eddying wind that was altogether insufferable ; and, at the same time, we were struggling among snow so deep, that our progress in the way we proposed going was very equivocal indeed ; for we had, by this time, lost all idea of east, west, north, or south. Still we were as busy as men determined on an enterprise of moment could be, and persevered on we knew not whither, sometimes rolling over the snow, and sometimes weltering in it up to the chin. The following instance of our successful exertions marks our progress to a tittle : There was an enclosure around the house to the westward, which we denominated “ the Park,” as was customary in Scotland at that period, and in that quarter, where a farm seldom

boasted more than one enclosed piece of ground. When we went away we calculated that it was two hours until day ; the Park did not extend above three hundred yards ; and we were still engaged in it when day-light appeared.

When we got free of the Park, we also got free of the eddy of the wind. It was now straight in our faces ; we went in a line before each other, and changed places every three or four minutes, and at length, after great fatigue, reached a long ridge of a hill where the snow was thinner, having been blown off by the force of the wind, and by this we had hopes of reaching within a short space of the ewes, which were still a mile and a half distant. Our master had taken the lead ; I was next him, and soon began to suspect, from the depth of the snow, that he was leading us quite wrong ; but as we always trusted implicitly to the person that was foremost for the time, I said nothing for a good while, until satisfied that we were going in a direction very nearly right opposite to that we intended. I then tried to expostulate with him ; but he did not seem to understand what I said ; and, on getting a glimpse of his countenance, I perceived that it was quite altered. Not to alarm the others, nor even himself, I said I was becoming terribly fatigued, and proposed that we should lean on the snow and take each a little whisky, (for I had brought a small bottle

in my pocket for fear of the worst), and some bread and cheese. This was unanimously agreed to, and I noted that he swallowed the spirits rather eagerly, a thing not usual with him, and when he tried to eat, it was long before he could swallow any thing. I was convinced that he would fail altogether, but, as it would have been easier to have got him to the shepherd's house, which was before us, than home again, I made no proposal for him to return. On the contrary, I said, if they would trust themselves entirely to me, I would engage to lead them to the ewes without going a foot out of the way. The other two agreed to this, and acknowledged that they knew not where they were; but he never opened his mouth, nor did he speak a word for two hours thereafter. It had only been a temporary exhaustion, however, for he afterwards recovered, and wrought till night as well as any of us; though he never could recollect a single circumstance that occurred during that part of our way, nor a word that was said, nor of having got any refreshment whatever.

At about half an hour past ten, we reached the flock, and just in time to save them. Before that, both Borthwick and the ploughman had lost their hats, notwithstanding all their precautions; and to impede us still farther, I went inadvertently over a precipice, and going down head foremost, between the scaur and the

snow, found it impossible to extricate myself, for the more I struggled I went the deeper. For all our troubles, I heard Borthwick above convulsed with laughter ;—he thought he had got the affair of the dunghill paid back. By holding by one another, and letting down a plaid to me, they hauled me up ; but I was terribly incommoded by snow that had got inside my clothes.

The ewes were standing in a close body ; one half of them were covered over with snow to the depth of ten feet, the rest were forced against a brae. We knew not what to do, for we had no spades to dig them out ; but to our agreeable astonishment, when those in front were removed, the rest walked out from below the snow after their neighbours in a body, for they had been so closely pent together, as to be all touching one another. If the snow-wreath had not broke, and crumbled down upon a few that were hindmost, we should have got them all out, without putting a hand to them. This was effecting a good deal more than any of the party expected a few hours before. There were one hundred ewes in another place near by, but of these we could only get out a very few, and lost all hopes of saving what remained.

It was now wearing towards mid-day, and there were occasionally short intervals in which we could see round us for perhaps a score of yards ; but we got only one

momentary glance of the hills around us all that day. I grew quite impatient to be at my own charge, and leaving the rest I went away to them by myself; that is, I went to the division that was left far out on the hills, while our master and the ploughman volunteered to rescue those that were down on the lower ground. I found mine in miserable circumstances, but making all possible exertion, I got out about one half of them, which I left in a place of safety, and made towards home, for it was beginning to grow dark, and the storm was again raging in all its darkness and fury. I was not in the least afraid of losing my way, for I knew all the declivities of the hills so well, that I could have come home with my eyes bound up; and indeed, long ere I got home, they were of no use to me. I was terrified for the water (Douglas Burn), for in the morning it was flooded and gorged up with snow in a dreadful manner, and I judged that it would be now quite impassable. At length I came to a place where I thought the water should be, and fell a-boring and groping for it with my long staff. No: I could find no water, and began to dread that, in spite of my supposed accuracy, I had gone wrong. This greatly surprised me, and standing still to consider, I looked up towards Heaven, I shall not say for what cause, and to my utter amazement thought I beheld trees over my head, flourishing abroad over the whole sky. I never had seen such an

optical delusion before ; it was so like enchantment that I knew not what to think, but dreaded that some extraordinary thing was coming over me, and that I was deprived of my right senses. I concluded that the storm was a great judgment sent on us for our sins, and that this strange phantasy was connected with it, an illusion effected by evil spirits. I stood a good while in this painful trance ; but at length, on making a bold exertion to escape from the fairy vision, I came all at once in contact with the Old Tower. Never in my life did I experience such a relief ; I was not only all at once freed from the fairies, but from the dangers of the gorged river. I had come over it on some mountain of snow, I knew not how nor where, nor do I know to this day. So that, after all, what I had seen were trees, and trees of no great magnitude neither ; but their appearance to my eyes it is impossible to describe. I thought they flourished abroad, not for miles, but for hundreds of miles, to the utmost verges of the visible heavens. Such a day and such a night may the eye of a shepherd never again behold !

On reaching home, I found our women-folk sitting in woful plight. It is well known how wonderfully acute they generally are, either at raising up imaginary evils, or magnifying those that exist ; and ours had made out a theory so fraught with misery and distress, that the poor things were quite overwhelmed with grief :

“ There was none of us ever to see the house again in *life*. There was no possibility of the thing happening, all circumstances considered. There was not a sheep in the country to be saved, nor a single shepherd left alive—nothing but *women* ! and there they were left, three poor helpless creatures, and the men lying dead out among the snow, and none to bring them home. Lord help them, what was to become of them !” They perfectly agreed in all this ; there was no dissenting voice ; and their prospects still continuing to darken with the fall of night, they had no other resource left them, long before my arrival, but to lift up their voices and weep. The group consisted of a young lady, our master’s niece, and two servant girls, all of the same age, and beautiful as three spring days, all of which are mild and sweet, but differ only a little in brightness. No sooner had I entered, than every tongue and every hand was put in motion, the former to pour forth queries faster than six tongues of men could answer with any degree of precision, and the latter to rid me of the incumbrances of snow and ice with which I was loaded. One slit up the sewing of my frozen plaid, another brushed the icicles from my locks, and a third unloosed my clotted snow-boots. We all arrived within a few minutes of each other, and all shared the same kind offices ; even our dogs shared of their caresses and ready assistance in ridding them of the frozen snow, and

the dear consistent creatures were six times happier than if no storm or danger had ever existed.—Let no one suppose that, even amid toils and perils, the shepherd's life is destitute of enjoyment.

Borthwick had found his way home without losing his aim in the least. I had deviated but little, save that I lost the river, and remained a short time in the country of the Fairies; but the other two had a hard struggle for life. They went off, as I said formerly, in search of seventeen scores of my flock that had been left in a place not far from the house; but being unable to find one of them, in searching for these they lost themselves, while it was yet early in the afternoon. They supposed that they had gone by the house very near to it, for they had toiled till dark among deep snow in the burn below; and if John Burnet, a neighbouring shepherd, had not heard them calling, and found and conducted them home, it would have stood hard with them indeed; for none of us would have looked for them in that direction. They were both very much exhausted, and the goodman could not speak above his breath that night. Next morning the sky was clear; but a cold intense wind still blew from the north. The face of the country was entirely altered. The form of every hill was changed, and new mountains leaned over every valley. All traces of burns, rivers, and lakes, were obliterated; for the frost had been commensurate with the

storm; and such as had never been witnessed in Scotland.

There having been three hundred and forty of my flock that had never been found at all during the preceding day, as soon as the morning dawned, we set all out to look after them. It was a hideous-looking scene—no one could cast his eyes around him and entertain any expectation of sheep being saved. It was one picture of desolation. There is a deep glen between Blackhouse and Dryhope, called the Hawkshaw Clutch, which is full of trees. There was not the top of one of them to be seen. This may convey some idea how the country looked; and no one can suspect that I would state circumstances otherwise than they were, when there are so many living that could confute me. When we came to the ground where the sheep should have been, there was not one of them above the snow. Here and there, at a great distance from each other, we could perceive the heads or horns of stragglers appearing; and these were easily got out: but when we had collected these few, we could find no more. They had been lying all abroad in a scattered state when the storm came on, and were covered over just as they had been lying. It was on a kind of sloping ground, that lay half beneath the wind, and the snow was uniformly from six to eight feet deep. Under this the hogs were lying scattered over at least one hundred acres of heathery

ground. It was a very ill-looking concern. We went about boring with our long poles, and often did not find one hog in a quarter of an hour. But at length a white shaggy colly, named Sparkie, that belonged to the cowherd boy, seemed to have comprehended something of our perplexity, for we observed him plying and scrapping in the snow with great violence, and always looking over his shoulder to us. On going to the spot, we found that he had marked straight above a sheep. From that he flew to another, and so on to another, as fast as we could dig them out, and ten times faster, for he sometimes had twenty or thirty holes marked beforehand.

We got out three hundred of that division before night, and about half as many on the other parts of the farm, in addition to those we had rescued the day before; and the greater part of these would have been lost had it not been for the voluntary exertions of Sparkie. Before the snow went away (which lay only eight days) we had got out every sheep on the farm, either dead or alive, except four; and that these were not found was not Sparkie's blame, for though they were buried below a mountain of snow at least fifty feet deep, he had again and again marked on the top of it above them. The sheep were all living when we found them; but those that were buried in the snow to a certain depth, being, I suppose, in a warm, half-suffocated state, though on being taken out they bounded away like roes, were in-

stantly after paralyzed by the sudden change of atmosphere, and fell down, deprived of all power in their limbs. We had great numbers of these to carry home and feed with the hand ; but others that were buried very deep, died outright in a few minutes. We did not, however, lose above sixty in all ; but I am certain Sparkie saved us at least two hundred.

We were for several days utterly ignorant how affairs stood with the country around us, all communication between farms being cut off, at least in the wild district where I lived ; but John Burnet, a neighbouring shepherd, on another farm, was remarkably good at picking up the rumours that were afloat in the country, which he delighted to circulate without abatement. Many people tell their stories by halves, and in a manner so cold and indifferent, that the purport can scarcely be discerned, and if it is, cannot be believed ; but that was not the case with John ; he gave them with *interest*, and we were very much indebted to him for the intelligence that we daily received that week. No sooner was the first brunt of the tempest over, than John made a point of going off at a tangent every day, to learn what was going on, and to bring us word of it. The accounts were most dismal ; the country was a charnel-house. The first day he brought us tidings of the loss of thousands of sheep, and likewise of the death of Robert Armstrong, a neighbour shepherd, one whom we all

knew well, he having but lately left the Blackhearts herd on another farm. He died not above three hundred paces from a farm-house, while at the same time it was known to all the inmates where he was. His companion left him at a dike-side, and went in to procure assistance; yet, near as it was, they could not reach him, though they attempted it again and again, and at length they were obliged to return, and suffer him to perish at the side of the dike. Three of my own intimate acquaintances perished that night. There was another shepherd named Watt, the circumstances of whose death were peculiarly affecting. He had gone to see his sweetheart the night before, with whom he had finally agreed and settled every thing about their marriage; but it so happened, in the inscrutable awards of Providence, that at the very time when the bells of his marriage were proclaimed in the church of Moffat, his companions were carrying him home a corpse from the hill.

It may not be amiss here to remark, that it was a received opinion all over the country, that sundry lives were lost, and a great many more endangered, by the administering of ardent spirits to the sufferers while in a state of exhaustion. It was a practice against which I entered my vehement protest, although the voice of the multitude should never be disregarded. A little bread and sweet milk, or even a little bread and gold,

water, proved a much safer restorative in the fields. There is no denying, that some who took a glass of spirits that night never spoke another word; even though they were continuing to walk and converse when their friends found them.

On the other hand, there was one woman who left her children, and followed her husband's dog, which brought her to his master lying in a state of insensibility. He had fallen down bareheaded among the snow and was all covered over, save one corner of his plaid. She had nothing better to take with her, when she set out, than a bottle of sweet milk and a little oatmeal cake, and yet, with the help of these, she so far recruited his strength as to get him safe home, though not without long and active perseverance. She took two little vials with her, and in these she heated the milk in her bosom.—That man would not be disposed to laugh at the silliness of the fair sex for some time.

It is perfectly unaccountable how easily people died. The frost must certainly have been prodigious; so intense as to have seized momentarily on the vitals of those that overheated themselves by wading and toiling too impatiently among the snow, a thing that is very aptly done. I have conversed with five or six that were carried home in a state of insensibility, who never would again have moved from the spot where they lay, and were only brought to life by rubbing and

warm applications ; and they uniformly declared, that they felt no kind of pain or debility, farther than an irresistible desire to sleep. Many fell down while walking and speaking, in a sleep so sound as to resemble torpidity ; and there is little doubt that those who perished slept away in the same manner. I knew a man well, whose name was Andrew Murray, that perished in the snow on Minchmoor ; and he had taken it so deliberately, that he had buttoned his coat and folded his plaid, which he had laid beneath his head for a bolster.

But it is now time to return to my notable literary society. In spite of the hideous prognostications that appeared, the members actually met, all save myself, in that solitary shieling before mentioned. It is easy to conceive how they were confounded and taken by surprise, when the storm burst forth on them in the middle of the night, while they were in the heat of sublime disputation. There can be little doubt that some loss was sustained in their respective flocks, by reason of that meeting ; but this was nothing, compared with the obloquy to which they were subjected on another account, and one which will scarcely be believed, even though the most part of the members are yet alive to bear testimony to it.

The storm was altogether an unusual convulsion of nature. Nothing like it had ever been seen or heard

of among us before ; and it was enough of itself to arouse every spark of superstition that lingered among these mountains. It did so. It was universally viewed as a judgment sent by God for the punishment of some heinous offence ; but what that offence was, could not for a while be ascertained. When, however, it came out, that so many men had been assembled in a lone unfrequented place, and busily engaged in some mysterious work at the very instant that the blast came on, no doubts were entertained that all had not been right there, and that some horrible rite or correspondence, with the powers of darkness had been going on. It so happened, too, that this shieling of Enter-treny was situated in the very vortex of the storm ; the devastations made by it extended all around that to a certain extent, and no farther on any one quarter than another. This was easily and soon remarked ; and, upon the whole, the first view of the matter had rather an equivocal appearance to those around, who had suffered so severely by it.

But still as the rumour grew, the certainty of the event gained ground—new corroborative circumstances were every day divulged, till the whole district was in an uproar, and several of the members began to meditate a speedy retreat from the country ; some of them, I know, would have fled, if it had not been for the advice of the late worthy and judicious Mr Bryden

of Crosslee. The first intimation that I had of it was from my friend John Burnet, who gave it me with his accustomed energy and full assurance. He came over one evening, and I saw by his face he had some great news. I think I remember, as I well may, every word that passed between us on the subject.

"Weel, chap," said he to me, "we hae fund out what has been the cause of a' this mischief now."

"What do you mean, John?"

"What do I mean?—It seems that a great squad o' birkies that ye are connectit wi', had met that night at the herd's house o' Ever Phawhope, and had raised the deil among them!"

Every countenance in the kitchen changed; the women gazed at John, and then at me, and their lips grew white. These kind of feelings are infectious, people may say what they will; fear begets fear as naturally as light springs from reflection. I reasoned stoutly at first against the veracity of the report, observing that it was utter absurdity, and a shame and disgrace for the country to believe such a ridiculous lie.

"Lie!" said John, "It's nae lie; they had him up among them like a great rough dog at the very time that the tempest began, and were glad to draw cuts, and gie him ane o' their number to get quit o' him again."

Every hair of my head, and inch of my frame,

crept when I heard this sentence ; for I had a dearly loved brother who was of the number, and several full cousins and intimate acquaintances ; indeed, I looked upon the whole assembly as my brethren, and considered myself involved in all their transactions. I could say no more in defence of the society's proceedings ; for, to tell the truth, though I am ashamed to acknowledge it, I suspected that the allegation might be true.

“ Has the deil actually taen awa ane o’ them bodily ? ” said Jean.

“ He has that,” returned John, “ and it’s thought the skaith wadna hae been grit, had he taen twa or three mae o’ them. Base villains ! that the hail country should hae to suffer for their pranks ! But, however, the law’s to tak its course on them, and they’ll find, ere a’ the play be played, that he has need of a lang spoon that sups wi’ the deil.”

The next day John brought us word, that it was “ *only* the servant-maid that the Ill Thief had taen away ; ” and the next again, that it was actually Bryden of Glenkerry ; but, finally, he was obliged to inform us, “ That a’ was exactly true, as it was first tauld, but only that Jamie Bryden, after being a-waiting for some days, had casten up again.”

There has been nothing since that time that has caused such a ferment in the country—nought else

could be talked of; and grievous was the blame attached to those who had the temerity to raise up the devil to waste the land. Legal proceedings, it is said, were actually meditated, and attempted; but lucky it was for the shepherds that they agreed to no reference, for such were the feelings of the country, and the opprobrium in which the act was held, that it is likely it would have fared very ill with them;—at all events, it would have required an arbiter of some decision and uprightness to have dared to oppose the prejudices that were entertained. Two men were sent to come to the house as by chance, and endeavour to learn from the shepherd, and particularly from the servant-maid, what grounds there were for inflicting legal punishment; but before that happened, I had the good luck to hear her examined myself, and that in a way by which all suspicions were put to rest, and simplicity and truth left to war with superstition alone. I deemed it very curious at the time, and shall give it verbatim, as nearly as I can recollect.

Being all impatience to learn particulars, as soon as the waters abated, so as to become fordable, I hasted over to Ettrick, and the day being fine, I found numbers of people astir on the same errand with myself,—the valley was moving with people, gathered in from the glens around, to hear and relate the dangers and difficulties that were just overpast. Among others,

the identical girl who served with the shepherd in whose house the meeting took place, had come down to Ettrick School-house to see her parents. Her name was Mary Beattie, a beautiful sprightly lass, about twenty years of age; and if the devil had taken her in preference to any one of the shepherds, his good taste could scarcely have been disputed. The first person I met was my friend, the late Mr James Anderson, who was as anxious to hear what had passed at the meeting as I was, so we two contrived a scheme whereby we thought we would hear every thing from the girl's own mouth.

We sent word to the School-house for Mary, to call at my father's house on her return up the water, as there was a parcel to go to Phawhope. She came accordingly, and when we saw her approaching, we went into a little sleeping apartment, where we could hear every thing that passed, leaving directions with my mother how to manage the affair. My mother herself was in perfect horror about the business, and believed it all; as for my father, he did not say much either the one way or the other, but bit his lip, and remarked, that, "folk would find that it was an ill thing to hae to do wi' the Enemy."

My mother would have managed extremely well, had her own early prejudices in favour of the doctrine of all kinds of apparitions not got the better of her.

She was very kind to the girl, and talked with her about the storm, and the events that had occurred, till she brought the subject of the meeting forward herself, on which the following dialogue commenced:—

“ But, dear Mary, my woman, what were the chiech a’ met about that night ?”

“ O, they were just gaun through their papers and arguing.”

“ Arguing ! what were they arguing about ?”

“ I have often thought about it sinsyne, but really I canna tell precisely what they were arguing about.”

“ Were you wi’ them a’ the time ?”

“ Yes, a’ the time, but the wee while I was milking the cow.”

“ And did they never bid ye gang out ?”

“ Oo no ; they never heedit whether I gaed out or in.”

“ It’s queer that ye canna mind ought ava ;—can ye no tell me ae word that ye heard them say ?”

“ I heard them saying something about the fitness o’ things.”

“ Ay, that was a braw subject for them ! But, Mary, did ye no hear them saying nae ill words ?”

“ No.”

“ Did ye no hear them speaking naething about the deil ?”

“ Very little.”

“ What were they saying about *him* ?”

"I thought, I aince heard Jamie Fletcher saying there was nae deil ava."

"Ah! the unwordy rascal! How durst he for the life o' him! I wonder he didna think shame."

"I fear aye he's something regardless, Jamie."

"I hope nane that belongs to me will ever join him in sic wickedness! But tell me, Mary, my womap, did ye no see nor hear naething uncanny about the house yoursell that night?"

"There was something like a plover cried twice i' the peat-neuk, in at the side o' Will's bed."

"A plover! His presence be about us! There was never a plover at this time o' the year. And in the house too! Ah, Mary, I'm feared and concerned about that night's wark! What thought ye it was that it cried?"

"I didna ken what it was,—it cried just like a plover."

"Did the callants look as they war fear'd when they heard it?"

"They lookit geyan queer."

"What did they say?"

"Ane cried, 'What is that?' and another said, 'What can it mean?'—'Hout,' quo' Jamie Fletcher, 'it's just some bit stray bird that has lost itsell.'—'I dinna ken,' quo' your Will, 'I dinna like it unco weel.'"

"Think ye, did nane o' the rest see ony thing?"

"I believe there was something seen."

"What was't?" (in a half whisper, with manifest alarm.)

"When Will gaed out to try if he could gang to the sheep, he met wi' a great big rough dog, that had very near worn him into a linn in the water."

My mother was now deeply affected, and after two or three smothered exclamations, she fell a-whispering; the other followed her example, and shortly after, they rose and went out, leaving my friend and me very little wiser than we were, for we had heard both these incidents before with little variation. I accompanied Mary to Phawhope, and met with my brother, who soon convinced me of the falsehood and absurdity of the whole report; but I was grieved to find him so much cast down and distressed about it. None of them durst well show their faces at either kirk or market for a whole year, and more. The weather continuing fine, we two went together and perambulated Eskdale Moor, visiting the principal scenes of carnage among the flocks, where we saw multitudes of men skinning and burying whole droves of sheep, taking with them only the skins and tallow.

I shall now conclude this long account of the storm, and its consequences, by an extract from a poet for whose works I always feel disposed to have a great partiality; and whoever reads the above will not doubt

on what incident the description is founded, nor yet deem it greatly overcharged.

* * * * *

“ Who was it rear’d these whelming waves?
Who scalp’d the brows of old Cairn Gorm,
And scoop’d these ever-yawning caves?”—
“ ’Twas I, the Spirit of the Storm !”

He waved his sceptre north away,
The arctic ring was reft asunder ;
And through the heaven the startling bray
Burst louder than the loudest thunder.

The feathery clouds, condensed and furl’d,
In columns swept the quaking glen ;
Destruction down the dale was hurl’d,
O’er bleating flocks and wondering men.

The Grampians groan’d beneath the storm ;
New mountains o’er the correi lean’d ;
Ben Nevis shook his shaggy form,
And wonder’d what his Sovereign mean’d.

Even far on Yarrow’s fairy dale,
The shepherd paused in dumb dismay ;
And cries of spirits in the gale
Lured many a pitying hind away.

The Lowthers felt the tyrant’s wrath ;
Proud Hartfell quaked beneath his brand ;
And Cheviot heard the cries of death,
Guarding his loved Northumberland.

But O, as fell that fateful night,
What horrors Avin wilds deform,
And choke the ghastly lingering light !
There whirl’d the vortex of the storm.

Ere morn the wind grew deadly still,
 And dawning in the air updrew,
 From many a shelve and shining hill,
 Her folding robe of fairy blue.

Then what a smooth and wondrous scene
 Hung o'er Loch Avin's lovely breast !
 Not top of tallest pine was seen,
 On which the dazzled eye could rest ;

But mitred cliff and crested fell,
 In lucid curls, her brows adorn ;
 Aloft the radiant crescents swell,
 All pure as robes by angels worn.

Sound sleeps our seer, far from the day,
 Beneath yon sleek and wreathed cone ;
 His spirit steals, unmiss'd, away,
 And dreams across the desert lone.

Sound sleeps our seer !—the tempests rave,
 And cold sheets o'er his bosom fling ;
 The moldwarp digs his mossy grave ;
 His requiem Avin eagles sing.

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CHAPTER X.

THE SHEPHERD'S DOG.

A CURIOUS story that appeared lately of a dog belonging to a shepherd, named John Hoy, has brought sundry similar ones to my recollection, which I am sure cannot fail to be interesting to those unacquainted with the qualities of that most docile and affectionate of the whole animal creation—the shepherd's dog.

The story alluded to was shortly this. John was at a sacrament of the Covenanters, and being loath to leave the afternoon sermon, and likewise obliged to have his ewes at the bught by a certain hour, gave his dog a quiet hint at the outskirts of the congregation, and instantly she went away, took the hills, and gathered the whole flock of ewes to the bught, as carefully and quietly as if her master had been with her, to the astonishment of a thousand beholders, for the ewes lay scattered over two large and steep hills.

This John Hoy was my uncle; that is, he was married to my mother's sister. He was all his life remark-

able for breeding up his dogs to perform his commands with wonderful promptitude and exactness, especially at a distance from him, and he kept always by the same breed. It may be necessary to remark here, that there is no species of animals so varied in their natures and propensities as the shepherd's dog, and these propensities are preserved inviolate in the same breed from generation to generation. One kind will manage sheep about hand, about a bught, shedding, or fold, almost naturally; and those that excel most in this kind of service, are always the least tractable at a distance; others will gather sheep from the hills, or turn them this way and that way, as they are commanded, as far as they can hear their master's voice, or note the signals made by his hand, and yet can never be taught to command sheep close around him. Some excel again in a kind of social intercourse. They understand all that is said to them, or of them, in the family; and often a good deal that is said of sheep, and of other dogs, their comrades. One kind will bite the legs of cattle, and no species of correction or disapprobation will restrain them, or ever make them give it up; another kind bays at the heads of cattle, and neither precept nor example will ever induce them to attack a beast behind, or bite its legs.

My uncle Hoy's kind were held in estimation over the whole country for their docility in what is termed *hirscl-rinning*; that is, gathering sheep at a distance,

but they were never very good at commanding sheep about hand. Often have I stood with astonishment at seeing him standing on the top of one hill, and the Tub, as he called an excellent snow-white bitch that he had, gathering all the sheep from another with great care and caution. I once saw her gathering the head of a hope, or glen, quite out of her master's sight, while all that she heard of him was now and then the echo of his voice or whistle from another hill, yet, from the direction of that echo, she gathered the sheep with perfect acuteness and punctuality.

I have often heard him tell an anecdote of another dog, called Nimble : One drift day, in *the seventy-four*, after gathering the ewes of Chapelhope, he found that he wanted about an hundred of them. He again betook himself to the heights, and sought for them the whole day without being able to find them, and began to suspect that they were covered over with snow in some ravine. Towards the evening it cleared up a little, and as a last resource, he sent away Nimble. She had found the scent of them on the hill while her master was looking for them ; but not having received orders to bring them, she had not the means of communicating the knowledge she possessed. But as soon as John gave her the gathering word, she went away, he said, like an arrow out of a bow, and in less than five minutes he beheld her at about a mile's distance, bringing

them round a hill, called the Middle, cocking her tail behind them, and apparently very happy at having got the opportunity of terminating her master's disquietude with so much ease.

I once witnessed another very singular feat performed by a dog belonging to John Graham, late tenant in Asbesteel. A neighbour came to his house after it was dark, and told him that he had lost a sheep on his farm, and that if he (Graham) did not secure her in the morning early, she would be lost, as he had brought her far. John said, he could not possibly get to the hill next morning, but if he would take him to the very spot where he lost the sheep, perhaps his dog Chieftain would find her that night. On that they went away with all expedition, lest the traces of the feet should cool; and I, then a boy, being in the house, went with them. The night was pitch-dark, which had been the cause of the man losing his ewe; and at length he pointed out a place to John, by the side of the water, where he had lost her. "Chieftain, fetch that," said John, "bring her back, sir." The dog jumped around and around, and reared himself up on end, but not being able to see any thing, evidently misapprehended his master; on which John fell a-cursing and swearing at the dog, calling him a great many blackguard names. He at last told the man, that he must point out the *very track* that the sheep

went, otherwise he had no chance of recovering it. The man led him to a grey stone, and said, he was sure she took the brae within a yard of that. "Chieftain, come hither to my foot, you great numb'd whelp," said John. Chieftain came. John pointed with his finger to the ground, "Fetch that, I say, sir, you stupid idiot—bring that back. Away!" The dog scent-ed slowly about on the ground for some seconds, but soon began to mend his pace, and vanished in the darkness. "Bring her back—away, you great calf!" vociferated John, with a voice of exultation, as the dog broke to the hill; and as all these good dogs perform their work in perfect silence, we neither saw nor heard any more for a long time. I think, if I remember right, we waited there about half an hour; during which time, all the conversation was about the small chance that the dog had to find the ewe, for it was agreed on all hands, that she must long ago have mixed with the rest of the sheep on the farm. How that was, no man will ever be able to decide. John, however, still persisted in waiting until his dog came back, either with the ewe or without her; and at last the trusty animal brought the individual lost sheep to our very foot, which the man took on his back, and went on his way rejoicing. I remember the dog was very warm, and hanging out his tongue—John called him all the ill names he could invent, which the animal

seemed to take in very good part. Such language seemed to be John's flattery to his dog. For my part, I went home, fancying I had seen a miracle, little weeding that it was nothing to what I myself was to experience in the course of my pastoral life, from the sagacity of the shepherd's dog.

My dog was always my companion. I conversed with him the whole day—I shared every meal with him, and my plaid in the time of a shower; the consequence was, that I generally had the best dogs in all the country. The first remarkable one that I had was named Sirrah. He was beyond all comparison the best dog I ever saw. He was of a surly unsocial temper—disdained all flattery, and refused to be caressed; but his attention to his master's commands and interests never will again be equalled by any of the canine race. The first time that I saw him, a drover was leading him in a rope; he was hungry, and lean, and far from being a beautiful cur, for he was all over black, and had a grim face striped with dark brown. The man had bought him of a boy for three shillings, somewhere on the Border, and doubtless had used him very ill on his journey. I thought I discovered a sort of sullen intelligence in his face, notwithstanding his dejected and forlorn situation; so I gave the drover a guinea for him, and appropriated the captive to myself. I believe there never was a guinea so

well laid out ; at least I am satisfied that I never laid out one to so good purpose. He was scarcely then a year old, and knew so little of herding, that he had never turned sheep in his life ; but as soon as he discovered that it was his duty to do so, and that it obliged me, I can never forget with what anxiety and eagerness he learned his different evolutions. He would try every way deliberately, till he found out what I wanted him to do ; and when once I made him to understand a direction, he never forgot or mistook it again. Well as I knew him, he very often astonished me, for when hard pressed in accomplishing the task that he was put to, he had expedients of the moment that bespoke a great share of the reasoning faculty. Were I to relate all his exploits, it would require a volume ; I shall only mention one or two, to prove what kind of an animal he was.

I was a shepherd for ten years on the same farm, where I had always about 700 lambs put under my charge every year at weaning-time. As they were of the short, or black-faced breed, the breaking of them was a very ticklish and difficult task. I was obliged to watch them night and day for the first four days, during which time I had always a person to assist me. It happened one year, that just about midnight the lambs broke, and came up the moor upon us, making a noise with their running louder than thunder. We got up and waved

our plaids, and shouted, in hopes to turn them, but we only made matters worse, for in a moment they were all round us, and by our exertions we cut them into three divisions; one of these ran north, another south, and those that came up between us straight up the moor to the westward. I called out, "Sirrah, my man, they're a' away;" the word, of all others, that set him most upon the alert, but owing to the darkness of the night, and blackness of the moor, I never saw him at all. As the division of the lambs that ran southward were going straight towards the fold, where they had been that day taken from their dams, I was afraid they would go there, and again mix with them; so I threw off part of my clothes, and pursued them, and by great personal exertion, and the help of another old dog that I had besides Sirrah, I turned them, but in a few minutes afterwards lost them altogether. I ran here and there, not knowing what to do, but always, at intervals, gave a loud whistle to Sirrah, to let him know that I was depending on him. By that whistling, the lad who was assisting me found me out; but he likewise had lost all trace whatsoever of the lambs. I asked if he had never seen Sirrah? He said, he had not; but that after I left him, a wing of the lambs had come round him with a swirl, and that he supposed Sirrah had then given them a turn, though he could not see him for the darkness. We both concluded, that whatever way the lambs ran at first,

they would finally land at the fold where they left their mothers, and without delay we bent our course towards that; but when we came there, there was nothing of them, nor any kind of bleating to be heard, and we discovered with vexation that we had come on a wrong track.

My companion then bent his course towards the farm of Glen on the north, and I ran away westward for several miles, along the wild tract where the lambs had grazed while following their dams. We met after it was day, far up in a place called the Black Cleuch, but neither of us had been able to discover our lambs, nor any traces of them. It was the most extraordinary circumstance that had ever occurred in the annals of the pastoral life! We had nothing for it but to return to our master, and inform him that we had lost his whole flock of lambs, and knew not what was become of one of them.

On our way home, however, we discovered a body of lambs at the bottom of a deep ravine, called the Flesh Cleuch, and the indefatigable Sirrah standing in front of them, looking all around for some relief, but still standing true to his charge. The sun was then up; and when we first came in view of them, we concluded that it was one of the divisions of the lambs, which Sirrah had been unable to manage until he came to that commanding situation, for it was about a mile and a half

distant from the place where they first broke and scattered. But what was our astonishment, when we discovered by degrees that not one lamb of the whole flock was wanting! How he had got all the divisions collected in the dark is beyond my comprehension. The charge was left entirely to himself from midnight until the rising of the sun; and if all the shepherds in the Forest had been there to assist him, they could not have effected it with greater propriety. All that I can say farther is, that I never felt so grateful to any creature below the sun as I did to Sirrah that morning.

I remember another achievement of his which I admired still more. I was sent to a place in Tweeddale, called Stanhope, to bring home a wild ewe that had strayed from home. The place lay at the distance of about fifteen miles, and my way to it was over steep hills, and athwart deep glens;—there was no path, and neither Sirrah nor I had ever travelled the road before. The ewe was brought in and put into a barn over night; and, after being frightened in this way, was set out to me in the morning to be driven home by herself. She was as wild as a roe, and bounded away to the side of the mountain like one. I sent Sirrah on a circular route wide before her, and let him know that he had the charge of her. When I left the people at the house, Mr Tweedie, the farmer, said to me, “Do you really suppose that you will drive that sheep over these

hills, and out through the midst of all the sheep in the country?" I said I would try to do it. "Then, let me tell you," said he, "that you may as well try to travel to yon sun." The man did not know that I was destined to do both the one and the other! Our way, as I said, lay all over wild hills, and through the middle of flocks of sheep. I seldom got a sight of the ewe, for she was sometimes a mile before me, sometimes two; but Sirrah kept her in command the whole way—never suffered her to mix with other sheep—nor, as far as I could judge, ever to deviate twenty yards from the track by which he and I went the day before. When we came over the great height towards Manor Water, Sirrah and his charge happened to cross it a little before me, and our way lying down hill for several miles, I lost all traces of them, but still held on my track. I came to two shepherd's houses, and asked if they had seen any thing of a black dog, with a branded face and a long tail, driving a sheep? No; they had seen no such thing; and, besides, all their sheep, both above and below the houses, seemed to be unmoved. I had nothing for it but to hold on my way homeward; and at length, on the corner of a hill at the side of the water, I discovered my trusty coal-black friend sitting with his eye fixed intently on the burn below him, and sometimes giving a casual glance behind to see if I was coming:—he had the ewe standing there, safe and unhurt.

When I got her home, and set her at liberty among our own sheep, he took it highly amiss. I could scarcely prevail with him to let her go ; and so dreadfully was he affronted, that she should have been let go free after all his toil and trouble, that he would not come near me all the way to the house, nor yet taste any supper when we got there. I believe he wanted me to take her home and kill her.

He had one very laughable peculiarity, which often created no little disturbance about the house—it was an outrageous ear for music. He never heard music, but he drew towards it ; and he never drew towards it, but he joined in it with all his vigour. Many a good psalm, song, and tune, was he the cause of spoiling ; for when he set fairly to, at which he was not slack, the voices of all his coadjutors had no chance with his. It was customary with the worthy old farmer with whom I resided, to perform family worship evening and morning ; and before he began, it was always necessary to drive Sirrah to the fields, and close the door. If this was at any time forgot or neglected, the moment that the psalm was raised, he joined with all his zeal, and at such a rate, that he drowned the voices of the family before three lines could be sung. Nothing farther could be done till Sirrah was expelled. But then ! when he got to the peat-stack knowe before the door, especially if he got

a blow in going out, he *did* give his powers of voice full scope, without mitigation ; and even at that distance he was often a hard match for us all.

Some imagined that it was from a painful sensation that he did this. No such thing. Music was his delight : it always drew him towards it like a charm. I slept in the byre-loft—Sirrah in the hay-mook in a corner below. When sore fatigued, I sometimes retired to my bed before the hour of family worship. In such cases, whenever the psalm was raised in the kitchen, which was but a short distance, Sirrah left his lair ; and laying his ear close to the bottom of the door to hear more distinctly, he growled a low note in accompaniment, till the sound expired ; and then rose, shook his ears, and returned to his hay-mook. Sacred music affected him most ; but in either that or any slow tune, when the tones dwelt upon the keynote, they put him quite beside himself ; his eyes had the gleam of madness in them ; and he sometimes quitted singing, and literally fell to barking. All his race have the same qualities of voice and ear in a less or greater degree.

The most painful part of Sirrah's history yet remains ; but, in memory of himself, it must be set down. He grew old, and unable to do my work by himself. I had a son of his coming up that promised well, and was a greater favourite with me than ever the other

was. The times were hard, and the keeping of them both was a tax upon my master which I did not like to impose, although he made no remonstrances. I was obliged to part with one of them ; so I sold old Sirrah to a neighbouring shepherd for three guineas. He was accustomed, while I was smearing, or doing any work about the farm, to go with any of the family when I ordered him, and run at their bidding the same as at my own ; but then, when he came home at night, a word of approbation from me was recompense sufficient, and he was ready next day to go with whomsoever I commanded him. Of course, when I sold him to this lad, he went away when I ordered him, without any reluctance, and wrought for him all that day and the next as well as ever he did in his life. But when he found that he was abandoned by me, and doomed to be the slave of a stranger for whom he did not care, he would never again do another feasible turn. The lad said that he ran in among the sheep like a whelp, and seemed intent on doing him all the mischief he could. The consequence was, that he was obliged to part with him in a short time ; but he had more honour than I had, for he took him to his father, and desired him to foster Sirrah, and be kind to him as long as he lived, *for the sake of what he had been ;* and this injunction the old man faithfully performed.

He came back to see me now and then for months

after he went away, but afraid of the mortification of being driven from the farm-house, he never came there ; but knowing well the road that I took to the hill in the morning, he lay down near to that. When he saw me coming, he did not venture near me, but walked round the hill, keeping always about two hundred yards off, and then returned to his new master again, satisfied for the time that there was no more shelter with his beloved old one for him. When I thought how easily one kind word would have attached him to me for life, and how grateful it would have been to my faithful old servant and friend, I could not help regretting my fortune that obliged us to separate. That unfeeling tax on the shepherd's dog, his only bread-winner, has been the cause of much pain in this respect. The parting with old Sirrah, after all that he had done for me, had such an effect on my heart, that I have never been able to forget it to this day ; the more I have considered his attachment and character, the more I have admired them ; and the resolution that he took up, and persisted in, of never doing a good turn for any other of my race, after the ingratitude that he had experienced from me, appeared to me to have a kind of heroism and sublimity in it. I am, however, writing nothing but the plain simple truth, to which there are plenty of living witnesses. I then made a vow to myself, which I have

religiously kept, and ever shall, never to sell another dog ; but that I may stand acquitted of all pecuniary motives,—which indeed those who know me will scarcely suspect me of,—I must add, that when I saw how matters went, I never took a farthing of the stipulated price of old Sirrah. I have Sirrah's race to this day ; and though none of them has ever equalled him as a sheep dog, yet they have far excelled him in all the estimable qualities of sociality and humour.

A single shepherd and his dog will accomplish more in gathering a stock of sheep from a Highland farm, than twenty shepherds could do without dogs ; and it is a fact, that, without this docile animal, the pastoral life would be a mere blank. Without the shepherd's dog, the whole of the open mountainous land in Scotland would not be worth a sixpence. It would require more hands to manage a stock of sheep, gather them from the hills, force them into houses and folds, and drive them to markets, than the profits of the whole stock would be capable of maintaining. Well may the shepherd feel an interest in his dog ; he it is indeed that earns the family's bread, of which he is himself content with the smallest morsel ; always grateful, and always ready to exert his utmost abilities in his master's interest. Neither hunger, fatigue, nor the worst of treatment, will drive him from his side ; he will follow him through fire and water, as the saying is,

and through every hardship, without murmur or repining, till he literally fall down dead at his foot. If one of them is obliged to change masters, it is sometimes long before he will acknowledge the new one, or condescend to work for him with the same willingness as he did for his former lord ; but if he once acknowledge him, he continues attached to him till death ; and though naturally proud and high-spirited, in as far as relates to his master, these qualities (or rather failings) are kept so much in subordination, that he has not a will of his own.

My own renowned Hector,* was the son and immediate successor of the faithful old Sirrah ; and though not nearly so valuable a dog, he was a far more interesting one. He had three times more humour and whim ; and though exceedingly docile, his bravest acts were mostly tinctured with a grain of stupidity, which showed his reasoning faculty to be laughably obtuse.

I shall mention a striking instance of it. I was once at the farm of Shorthope, in Ettrick head, receiving some lambs that I had bought, and was going to take to market, with some more, the next day. Owing to some accidental delay, I did not get final delivery of the lambs till it was growing late ; and being obliged to be at my own house that night, I was not a little

* See the Mountain Bard.

one place to another, so did he in a moment ; and then squatting down, he kept his point sedulously, till he was either called off or fell asleep.

He was an exceedingly poor taker of meat, was always to press to it, and always lean ; and often he would not taste it till we were obliged to bring in the cat. The malicious looks that he cast at her from under his eyebrows on such occasions, were exceedingly ludicrous, considering his utter incapability of wronging her. Whenever he saw her, he drew near his bicker, and looked angry, but still he would not taste till she was brought to it ; and then he cocked his tail, set up his birses, and began a-lapping furiously, in utter desperation. His good nature was so immovable, that he would never refuse her a share of what he got ; he even lapped close to the one side of the dish, and left her room—but mercy as he did ply !

It will appear strange to hear a dog's reasoning faculty mentioned, as it has been ; but I have hardly ever seen a shepherd's dog do any thing without perceiving his reasons for it. I have often amused myself in calculating what his motives were for such and such things, and I generally found them very cogent ones. But Hector had a droll stupidity about him, and took up forms and rules of his own, for which I could never perceive any motive that was not even farther out of the way than the action itself. He had one uniform

practice, and a very bad one it was, during the time of family worship,—that just three or four seconds before the conclusion of the prayer, he started to his feet, and ran barking round the apartment like a crazed beast. My father was so much amused with this, that he would never suffer me to correct him for it, and I scarcely ever saw the old man rise from the prayer without his endeavouring to suppress a smile at the extravagance of Hector. None of us ever could find out how he knew that the prayer was near done, for my father was not formal in his prayers ; but certes he did know,—of that we had nightly evidence. There never was any thing for which I was so puzzled to discover a reason as this ; but, from accident, I did discover it, and, however ludicrous it may appear, I am certain I was correct. It was much in character with many of Hector's feats, and rather, I think, the most *outré* of any principle he ever acted on. As I said, his chief daily occupation was pointing the cat. Now, when he saw us all kneel down in a circle, with our faces couched on our paws, in the same posture with himself, it struck his absurd head, that we were all engaged in pointing the cat. He lay on tenters all the time, but the acuteness of his ear enabling him, through time, to ascertain the very moment when we would all spring to our feet, he thought to himself, “ I shall be first after her for you all ! ”

made him a little troublesome on his own charge, and set him a-running round and round them, turning them in at corners, out of a sort of impatience to be employed as well as his baying neighbours at the fold. Whenever old Sirrah found himself hard set, in commanding wild sheep on steep ground, where they are worst to manage, he never failed, without any hint to the purpose, to throw himself wide in below them, and lay their faces to the hill, by which means he got the command of them in a minute. I never could make Hector comprehend this advantage, with all my art, although his father found it out entirely of himself. The former would turn or wear sheep no other way, but on the hill above them; and though very good at it, he gave both them and himself double the trouble and fatigue.

It cannot be supposed that he could understand all that was passing in the little family circle, but he certainly comprehended a good part of it. In particular, it was very easy to discover that he rarely missed aught that was said about himself, the sheep, the cat, or of a hunt. When aught of that nature came to be discussed, Hector's attention and impatience soon became manifest. There was one winter evening, I said to my mother that I was going to Bowerhope for a fortnight, for that I had more conveniency for writing with Alexander Laidlaw, than at home; and I added, "But I will not take Hector with me, for he is constantly quarrel-

ling with the rest of the dogs, singing music, or breeding some uproar."—"Na, na," quoth she, "leave Hector with me; I like aye best to have him at hame, poor fellow."

These were all the words that passed. The next morning the waters were in a great flood, and I did not go away till after breakfast; but when the time came for tying up Hector, he was wanting.—"The deuce's in that beast," said I; "I will wager that he heard what we were saying yesternight, and has gone off for Bowerhope as soon as the door was opened this morning."

"If that should really be the case, I'll think the beast no canny," said my mother.

The Yarrow was so large as to be quite impassable, so that I had to go up by St Mary's Loch, and go across by the boat; and, on drawing near to Bowerhope, I soon perceived that matters had gone precisely as I suspected. Large as the Yarrow was, and it appeared impassable by any living creature, Hector had made his escape early in the morning, had swum the river, and was sitting, "like a drookit hen," on a knoll at the east end of the house, awaiting my arrival with much impatience. I had a great attachment to this animal, who, with a good deal of absurdity, joined all the amiable qualities of his species. He was rather of a small size, very rough and shagged, and not far from the colour of a fox.

His son, Lion, was the very picture of his dad, had

a good deal more sagacity, but also more selfishness. A history of the one, however, would only be an epitome of that of the other. Mr William Nicholson took a fine likeness of this latter one, which that gentleman still possesses. He could not get him to sit for his picture in such a position as he wanted, till he exhibited a singularly fine picture of his, of a small dog, on the opposite side of the room. Lion took it for a real animal, and, disliking its fierce and important look exceedingly, he immediately set up his ears and his shaggy bristles, and fixing a stern eye on the picture, in manifest wrath, he would then sit for a whole day, and point his eye at it, without moving away or altering his position.

It is a curious fact, in the history of these animals, that the most useless of the breed have often the greatest degree of sagacity in trifling and useless matters. An exceedingly good sheep-dog attends to nothing else but that particular branch of business to which he is bred. His whole capacity is exerted and exhausted on it, and he is of little avail in miscellaneous matters; whereas, a very indifferent cur, bred about the house, and accustomed to assist with every thing, will often put the more noble breed to disgrace in these paltry services. If one calls out, for instance, that the cows are in the corn, or the hens in the garden, the house-colley needs no other hint, but runs and turns them out. The shepherd's dog knows not what is astir; and, if he is called out in a

hurry for such work, all that he will do is to break to the hill, and rear himself up on end, to see if no sheep are running away. A bred sheep-dog, if coming ravening from the hills, and getting into a milk-house, would most likely think of nothing else than filling his belly with the cream. Not so his initiated brother. He is bred at home, to a more civilized behaviour. I have known such lie night and day, among from ten to twenty pails full of milk, and never once break the cream of one of them with the tip of his tongue, nor would he suffer cat, rat, or any other creature, to touch it. This latter sort, too, are far more acute at taking up what is said in a family. There was a farmer of this country, a Mr Alexander Cuninghame, who had a bitch that, for the space of three or four years, in the latter part of her life, met him always at the boundary of his farm, about a mile and a half from his house, on his way home. If he was half a day away, a week, or a fortnight, it was all the same; she met him at that spot, and there never was an instance known of her going to wait his arrival there on a wrong day. If this was a fact, which I have heard averred by people who lived in the house at that time, she could only know of his coming home by hearing it mentioned in the family. The same animal would have gone and brought the cows from the hill when it grew dark, without any bidding, yet she was a very indifferent sheep-dog.

The anecdotes of these animals are all so much alike, that were I but to relate the thousandth part of those I have heard, they would often look very much like repetitions. I shall therefore only mention one or two of the most singular, which I know to be well authenticated.

There was a shepherd lad near Langholm, whose name was Scott, who possessed a bitch, famed over all the West Border for her singular tractability. He could have sent her home with one sheep, two sheep, or any given number, from any of the neighbouring farms; and in the lambing season, it was his uniform practice to send her home with the kebbed ewes just as he got them.—I must let the town reader understand this. A kebbed ewe is one whose lamb dies. As soon as such is found, she is immediately brought home by the shepherd, and another lamb put to her; and this lad, on going his rounds on the hill, whenever he found a kebbed ewe, immediately gave her in charge to his bitch to take home, which saved him from coming back that way again, and going over the same ground he had looked before. She always took them carefully home, and put them into a fold which was close by the house, keeping watch over them till she was seen by some one of the family; and then that moment she decamped, and hasted back to her master, who sometimes sent her three times home in one morn-

ing, with different charges. It was the custom of the farmer to watch her, and take the sheep in charge from her; but this required a good deal of caution; for as soon as she perceived that she was seen, whether the sheep were put into the fold or not, she conceived her charge at an end, and no flattery could induce her to stay and assist in folding them. There was a display of accuracy and attention in this, that I cannot say I have ever seen equalled.

The late Mr Steel, flesher in Peebles, had a bitch that was fully equal to the one mentioned above, and that in the very same qualification too. Her feats in taking home sheep from the neighbouring farms into the flesh-market at Peebles by herself, form innumerable anecdotes in that vicinity, all similar to one another. But there is one instance related of her, that combines so much sagacity with natural affection, that I do not think the history of the animal creation furnishes such another.

Mr Steel had such an implicit dependence on the attention of this animal to his orders, that whenever he put a lot of sheep before her, he took a pride in leaving it to herself, and either remained to take a glass with the farmer of whom he had made the purchase, or took another road, to look after bargains or other business. But one time he chanced to commit a drove to her charge at a place called Wilkenslee, without at-

tending to her condition, as he ought to have done. This farm is five miles from Peebles, over wild hills, and there is no regularly defined path to it. Whether Mr Steel remained behind, or took another road, I know not; but on coming home late in the evening, he was astonished at hearing that his faithful animal had never made her appearance with the drove. He and his son, or servant, instantly prepared to set out by different paths in search of her; but on their going out to the street, there was she coming with the drove, no one missing; and, marvellous to relate, she was carrying a young pup in her mouth! She had been taken in travail on the hills; and how the poor beast had contrived to manage her drove in her state of suffering, is beyond human calculation; for her road lay through sheep the whole way. Her master's heart smote him when he saw what she had suffered and effected; but she was nothing daunted; and having deposited her young one in a place of safety, she again set out full speed to the hills, and brought another, and another, till she brought her whole litter, one by one; but the last one was dead. I give this as I have heard it related by the country people; for though I knew Mr Walter Steel well enough, I cannot say I ever heard it from his own mouth. I never entertained any doubt, however, of the truth of the relation; and certainly it is worthy of being preserved, for the credit

of that most docile and affectionate of all animals—the shepherd's dog.

The stories related of the dogs of sheep-stealers are fairly beyond all credibility. I cannot attach credit to those, without believing the animals to have been devils incarnate, come to the earth for the destruction of both the souls and bodies of men. I cannot mention names, for the sake of families that still remain in the country; but there have been sundry men executed, who belonged to this quarter of the realm, for that heinous crime, in my own time; and others have absconded, just in time to save their necks. There was not one of these to whom I allude who did not acknowledge his dog to be the greatest offender. One young man, in particular, who was, I believe, overtaken by justice for his first offence, stated, that after he had folded the sheep by moon-light, and selected his number from the flock of a former master, he took them out, and set away with them towards Edinburgh. But before he had got them quite off the farm, his conscience smote him, as he said, (but more likely a dread of that which soon followed,) and he quitted the sheep, letting them go again to the hill. He called his dog off them; and mounting his pony, rode away. At that time he said his dog was capering and playing around him, as if glad of having got free of a troublesome business; and he regarded him no more, till,

after having rode about three miles, he thought again and again that he heard something coming up behind him. Halting, at length, to ascertain what it was, in a few minutes his dog came up with the stolen drove, driving them at a furious rate to keep pace with his master. The sheep were all smoking, and hanging out their tongues, and their driver was fully as warm as they. The young man was now exceedingly troubled; for the sheep having been brought so far from home, he dreaded there would be a pursuit, and he could not get them home again before day. Resolving, at all events, to keep his hands clear of them, he corrected his dog in great wrath, left the sheep once more, and taking his dog with him, rode off a second time. He had not ridden above a mile, till he perceived that his dog had again given him the slip; and suspecting for what purpose, he was terribly alarmed as well as chagrined; for the day-light approached, and he durst not make a noise calling on his dog, for fear of alarming the neighbourhood, in a place where both he and his dog were known. He resolved therefore to abandon the animal to himself, and take a road across the country which he was sure his dog did not know, and could not follow. He took that road; but being on horseback, he could not get across the enclosed fields. He at length came to a gate, which he closed behind him, and went about half a mile farther, by a zigzag course, to a farm-house

where both his sister and sweetheart lived ; and at that place he remained until after breakfast time. The people of this house were all examined on the trial, and no one had either seen sheep, or heard them mentioned, save one man, who came up to the young man as he was standing at the stable-door, and told him that his dog had the sheep safe enough down at the Crooked Yett, and he needed not hurry himself. He answered, that the sheep were not his—they were young Mr Thomson's, who had left them to his charge ; and he was in search of a man to drive them, which made him come off his road.

After this discovery, it was impossible for the poor fellow to get quit of them ; so he went down and took possession of the stolen property once more, carried them on, and disposed of them ; and, finally, the transaction cost him his life. The dog, for the last four or five miles that he had brought the sheep, could have no other guide to the road his master had gone, but the smell of his pony's feet.

It is also well known that there was a notorious sheep-stealer in the county of Mid-Lothian, who, had it not been for the skins and sheep's-heads, would never have been condemned, as he could, with the greatest ease, have proved an *alibi* every time on which there were suspicions cherished against him. He always went by one road, calling on his acquaintances, and ta-

king care to appear to every body by whom he was known ; while his dog went by another with the stolen sheep ; and then on the two felons meeting again, they had nothing more ado than turn the sheep into an associate's enclosure, in whose house the dog was well fed and entertained, and would have soon taken all the fat sheep on the Lothian Edges to that house. This was likewise a female, a jet-black one, with a deep coat of soft hair, but smooth-headed, and very strong and handsome in her make. On the disappearance of her master, she lay about the hills and the places he had frequented ; but never attempted to steal a drove by herself, nor yet any thing for her own hand. She was kept a while by a relation of her master's ; but never acting heartily in his service, soon came to an untimely end. Of this there is little doubt, although some spread the report that one evening, after uttering two or three loud howls, she had vanished !

THE END.

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